



**Chairman's Statement
of the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Session with Canada**

10 September 2020, Viet Nam

1. The ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Session with Canada was held on 10 September 2020. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation of Myanmar, and the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.
2. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration of ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership (2016-2020). Noting that the current Plan of Action is due for completion this year, the Meeting adopted the new Plan of Action (2021-2025) that will guide both sides in further strengthening the ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations over the next five years. The Meeting noted Canada's continued desire to elevate ASEAN-Canada relations to a strategic level and its interest to join ASEAN-led mechanisms including EAS, ADMM-Plus, and EAMF.
3. The Meeting reiterated support to the priorities of ASEAN this year in advancing a "Cohesive and Responsive" ASEAN under Viet Nam's Chairmanship and welcomed the *ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN: Rising Above Challenges and Sustaining Growth*, adopted at the 36th ASEAN Summit on 26 June 2020. The Meeting underlined the need to strengthen regional solidarity and maintain ASEAN Centrality to respond effectively to current and future challenges as well as harness opportunities including those brought about by digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).
4. The Meeting recognised the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and the world and underscored the importance of enhanced international cooperation with external partners in addressing the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and other public health emergencies. The Meeting welcomed the assistance provided by Canada's Weapon's Threat Reduction Programme to the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre (ABVC), which is one of the health mechanisms activated by ASEAN in response to COVID-19. The Meeting also highlighted the need for joint collaboration on scientific research and development of vaccines and anti-viral medicines that are affordable and accessible to all, building and maintaining resilient, open and connected supply chains and supporting a sustained economic recovery. Towards this end, ASEAN Ministers recognised Canada's contributions to the Access to COVID-19 (ACT) Accelerator and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), which are leading global efforts to accelerate

the development, production and equitable distribution of new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines, and looked forward to Canada's support for the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies once it is established. The Ministers also encouraged efforts from Canada in supporting ASEAN's efforts to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and development of a comprehensive recovery framework.

5. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct governing inter-State relations in the region, underscored its relevance to the wider region and recognised its contribution to promoting regional peace, stability, and security.
6. The Meeting underscored the importance of maintaining ASEAN centrality and unity in the evolving regional architecture and reiterated their commitment to supporting an ASEAN-centred regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based, built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms. The Meeting underscored the importance of multilateralism, regionalism, and international law in contributing to global and regional peace, stability, and prosperity. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and looked forward to Canada's support in the four key areas identified in the AOIP, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and economic and other areas of cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms. The Meeting affirmed that such cooperation helps promote mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit as well as to contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.
7. The Meeting welcomed Canada's continued support for ASEAN's regional efforts in strengthening cybersecurity and combatting transnational crimes, terrorism, trafficking in persons and people smuggling, through activities under the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as well as capacity building initiatives under the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) mechanism. The Meeting also welcomed the ASEAN-Canada Work Plan to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime (2019-2022) adopted ad referendum by SOMTC and Canada in December 2019.
8. The Meeting underlined the importance of stepping up efforts to enhance trade and investment ties including through a possible ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which would emphasise ASEAN and Canada's support for a free, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. The Meeting noted the successful ASEAN Economic Ministers – Canada Consultations on August 29 where Ministers tasked officials to develop a reference paper on a possible FTA for Economic Ministers' further consideration at their next meeting in 2021. The meeting also looked forward to start the negotiation process of the possible ASEAN-Canada FTA.
9. The Meeting also highlighted Canada's supports to ASEAN's MSMEs through The Canada-OECD Project on ASEAN SMEs (COPAS) 2016-2020 and encouraged Canada to continue its support to the MSMEs in the region, especially in the area of women entrepreneurship.

10. The Meeting looked forward to the possible establishment of an ASEAN-Canada dedicated fund to support its collaborative programmes with ASEAN. The Meeting noted Canada's support to advance gender equality, especially through Canada's co-sponsorship of the ASEAN Regional Forum Joint Statement on Promoting Women for Peace and Security in ASEAN in August 2019 and support for capacity building on this front. The Meeting welcomed Canada's support and contribution to ASEAN's initiatives in mitigating COVID-19 pandemic, and welcomed the provision of personal protective equipment in June 2020 to ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Secretariat.
11. The Meeting appreciated the Canada-ASEAN Scholarships and Educational Exchanges for Development (SEED) initiative, which has provided 214 scholarships for students from ASEAN Member States to study in Canada since September 2018, and emphasised the importance of utilising online platforms to ensure continuity for such initiatives. The Meeting welcomed the launching of its mid-career component in December 2019 and looked forward to further expanding people-to-people relations beyond education, such as through tourism and cultural exchanges. The Meeting also encouraged Canada to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN in other areas, especially connectivity through innovative financing for infrastructure development; gender mainstreaming, women empowerment including through the WPS agenda; migrant workers; MSMEs; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); and sustainable development.
12. The Meeting exchanged views on regional issues of mutual interest and concern, including the situation in the Korean Peninsula and recent developments in the South China Sea. The Meeting also reaffirmed its support to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula which will contribute to peace and stability of the region, and the establishment of permanent peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.
13. The Meeting discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some countries over recent developments in the South China Sea and underscored the importance of promoting and maintaining peace and stability, a rules-based order, freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea. The Meeting emphasised the importance of non-militarisation, self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability as well as pursuing the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for diplomatic and legal processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, which serves as the basis for determining maritime entitlements, sovereign rights, jurisdiction and legitimate interests over maritime zones, and sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The Meeting encouraged all parties concerned to continue to engage in constructive discussions and work towards preserving regional peace and stability. The Meeting underscored the importance of full and

effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. The Ministers welcomed positive progress in the negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) despite the challenging COVID-19 situation and looked forward to the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC that is consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

