Overview of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations

1. Since New Zealand became ASEAN’s Dialogue Partner in 1975, the ASEAN-New Zealand dialogue relations has evolved to a wide range of cooperation across the three ASEAN Community pillars. The partnership between ASEAN and New Zealand reached a significant milestone at the ASEAN-New Zealand 40th Anniversary Commemorative Summit held on 22 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, during which the Leaders announced the elevation of the ASEAN-New Zealand dialogue relations to a strategic level through the “Joint ASEAN-New Zealand Leaders’ Statement on the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations: Advancing our Strategic Partnership towards greater mutual benefit and prosperity”. The vision set out in the Joint Statement is being implemented through the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Statement for ASEAN-New Zealand Strategic Partnership (2016-2020).

Political-Security Cooperation

2. New Zealand continues to engage with ASEAN in the political-security pillar through their active participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC).

3. Cooperation in counter-terrorism and combating transnational crime has been strengthened through the framework of the ‘ASEAN-New Zealand Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism’. To date, New Zealand has participated in eight Senior Officials’ Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) Plus New Zealand Consultations.

4. New Zealand acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) on 28 July 2005. Furthermore, high level dialogue and engagement continues to take place, including the attendance of New Zealand’s Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern in the 14th East Asia Summit (EAS) in November 2019, in Thailand, as well as the attendance of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Rt Hon Winston Peters at the ARF and EAS Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in August 2019 in Thailand.

Economic Cooperation

5. The 25th AEM-CER Consultations noted the 6.6 per cent increase in ASEAN’s total trade with New Zealand from AUD 15.95 billion to AUD 16.9 billion in 2019. While, New Zealand’s direct investment in ASEAN for the same year was valued at AUD 855 million.¹

6. The Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) was signed by the Economic Ministers of ASEAN, Australia, and New Zealand on 27 February 2009. ASEAN Economic Ministers as well as Economic Ministers from Australia and New Zealand at the 25th AEM-CER Consultations resolved to take forward the AANZFTA upgrade negotiations with urgency to ensure that AANZFTA remains fit for purpose, and to provide a signal of AANZFTA Parties’ commitment to regional integration.

7. The AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) was established in 2010 and has contributed to enhancing the capacity of ASEAN Member States’ institutions in implementing the AANZFTA. At the 25th AEM-CER Consultations, the Ministers also acknowledged the success of AECSP and welcomed Australia’s and New Zealand’s commitment to introduce a successor programme for economic cooperation under the AANZFTA beyond 2021.

8. New Zealand is one of the six Dialogue Partners of ASEAN that joined the negotiations on a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). At the 3rd RCEP Summit held on 4 November 2019 in Bangkok, Leaders noted that 15 of the 16 RCEP countries have concluded the text-based negotiations and essentially all their market access issues, and directed the commencement of legal scrubbing to prepare the agreement for signature in 2020.

9. Furthermore, through the expanded and reciprocal “ASEAN – New Zealand Young Business Leaders’ Initiative (YBLI), New Zealand supported the efforts to enable young business leaders from ASEAN Member States to foster better links with New Zealand’s business community.

Social-cultural cooperation

10. New Zealand has provided support for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), as well as the short-term training in disaster management targeting officials of National Disaster Management Office from the ten ASEAN Member States through the AHA Centre’s Executive (ACE) programme.

11. New Zealand has also supported ASEAN through various cooperation programmes, including the New Zealand Prime Minister’s Fellowship, the ASEAN Young Diplomat Study Tour, the ASEAN-New Zealand Scholarships for ASEAN Students, and the English Language Training for Officials (ELTO) Programme, which will further solidify the strong links between ASEAN and New Zealand. New Zealand announced the ASEAN@50 fellowships at the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC+1) Session with New Zealand in August 2017, and in 2018-2019, five ASEAN@50
fellowships were awarded to strengthen academic links and enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between the various stakeholders in New Zealand and ASEAN.

**Development Cooperation**

12. Under the ASEAN-New Zealand Plan of Action (2016-2020), New Zealand has made a significant increase in investment into the People Strategy and the Prosperity Strategy, which will further strengthen the ASEAN-New Zealand relations. The **People Strategy** focuses on the development for the people in the region, particularly the youths, including current and future leaders, and will foster greater flows of people in both directions. The **Prosperity Strategy** focuses on agriculture and trade initiatives to support ASEAN and New Zealand’s economic growth, achieve common regional integration objectives, and narrow the development gap within and between ASEAN countries. New Zealand’s support towards narrowing the development gap includes capacity building and technical assistance to CLMV countries.