



**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT
OF THE SECOND ASEAN-AUSTRALIA BIENNIAL SUMMIT**

Viet Nam, 14 November 2020

1. The Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit was held via video conference on 14 November 2020. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and was attended by Heads of State/Government and High Representatives of ASEAN Member States and the Honourable Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance.
2. We were pleased to note the steady progress achieved in the relations between ASEAN and Australia over the past 46 years, including the full implementation of the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2015-2019), the 15 initiatives from the 2018 ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, and the cooperation initiatives announced at the ASEAN-Australia Informal Breakfast Summit in 2018. We looked forward to further strengthening cooperation under the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2020-2024).
3. ASEAN Leaders welcomed Australia's continued support for ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture through ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). We reiterated our commitment to supporting an ASEAN-centred regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based, built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms and underscored the importance of multilateralism, regionalism and adherence to international law and respect for sovereignty in contributing to global and regional peace, stability and prosperity.
4. We reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and recognised that the AOIP and its principles, which include, among others, openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based approach and respect for sovereignty and international law, will serve as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions to promote mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit as well as to contribute to peace, security, stability, freedom and prosperity. In this regard, ASEAN Leaders welcomed Australia's support and cooperation with ASEAN, in accordance with the principles contained in the AOIP and in the four (4) cooperation areas identified, namely maritime

cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

5. We recognised the unprecedented challenges posed by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and expressed condolences for the loss of lives and due to COVID-19. We affirmed the importance of an open, inclusive, transparent and rules-based approach as we respond to the pandemic, including by addressing the spread of disinformation and misinformation on COVID-19. We welcomed the resolution on the COVID-19 response, adopted at the 73rd World Health Assembly in May 2020. We noted the importance of strengthening multilateral cooperation to address its challenges, as well as strengthening joint efforts for post-pandemic robust recovery and other public health emergencies. We underlined the importance of developing vaccines that are safe, effective, accessible, and affordable to all, and encouraged collaborative research between the private sector and government-funded institutions and also underscored the commitment to work with the World Health Organisation (WHO). We welcomed Australia's contribution of \$500 million to promote access to safe, effective, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines and regional health security for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
6. We welcomed the expanding cooperation between ASEAN and Australia to respond to COVID-19 and noted the successful convening of the Special ASEAN-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 in June 2020 and the ASEAN-Australia Health Experts Meeting in July 2020. We further welcomed Australia's announcement of a substantial AUD 23 million package of initiatives to strengthen ASEAN-Australia partnership on COVID-19 response and recovery, as well as an additional AUD 60 million package of initiatives under Australia's Partnership for Recovery policy to support health security, promote connectivity, digital transformation, and economic integration for a strong regional economic recovery, which also included Australia's pledge of AUD 1 million to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. We looked forward to continued collaboration under Australia's Partnerships for Recovery policy to bolster regional health security, stability and economic recovery. We welcomed further strengthening of cooperation on health systems and to mitigate future pandemics, including through Australia's commitment of \$21 million to support the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. ASEAN Leaders encouraged Australia's support for the ASEAN Regional Reserves of Medical Supplies, as well as the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan.
7. We reaffirmed our commitment to deepening political-security cooperation, on traditional and non-traditional security issues, including countering terrorism, violent extremism, and other transnational crimes, including combatting trafficking in persons, promoting safe migration, strengthening cybersecurity, maritime security and maritime cooperation, promoting non-proliferation and disarmament,

promoting the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and looked forward to the next iteration of the ASEAN-Australia WPS Dialogue. In this regard, ASEAN Leaders noted Australia's active participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms, particularly in co-sponsoring several documents as well as co-chairing a number of activities on these issues, including the East Asia Summit Cyber Capacity Building Workshop "Regional Cyber Capacity Building: Seizing the Fourth Industrial Revolution" co-hosted by Singapore and Australia. We renewed our resolve to promote and protect the human rights of our peoples, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to continue enhancing cooperation including via ongoing consultations between Australia and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

8. We welcomed the enhancing of defence cooperation to address shared traditional and non-traditional challenges through ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). We noted Australia's 2020 vision for defence engagement with ASEAN. We also noted Australia's commitment to deepen its support for the region's emerging security needs, including through increased cooperation on military exchanges, infectious diseases, cyber resilience, maritime security and peacekeeping, and expanding its Defence Advisor and Attaché network to include resident representation in all ASEAN countries.
9. We recognised the positive impact of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) on economic growth in the region. We welcomed the efforts made in the implementation of AANZFTA and the Work Plan for the AANZFTA Upgrade Negotiations. In light of the ongoing disruption and impact of COVID-19, we encouraged the upgrade negotiations to ensure that AANZFTA remains fit for purpose, and to provide a signal of the AANZFTA Parties' commitment to regional integration. In this regard, we looked forward to the launch of the AANZFTA Upgrade Negotiations in the first quarter of 2021, with a view to concluding the Second Protocol to Amend the AANZFTA in the agreed timeframe.
10. ASEAN Leaders welcomed the commitment from Australia for the continued support to the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP) until 2021. Noting the success of the AECSP, we also welcomed Australia's commitment to continue supporting ASEAN to implement its free trade agreement commitments and support regional economic integration.
11. We remained concerned over the unabating tide of protectionism and anti-globalisation sentiments and reaffirmed our commitment to supporting and maintaining a free, open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based multilateral trading system that promotes regional economic cooperation. We acknowledged

the importance of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and welcomed the conclusion and signing of the RCEP Agreement at the 4th RCEP Summit on 15 November 2020, which would serve as a clear signal of the region's unwavering support for the multilateral trading system, regional integration as well as economic development across the region.

12. ASEAN Leaders welcomed Australia's contribution to regional economic integration under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, including through its support for the development and implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III (2016 – 2020) and IAI Work Plan IV (2021 – 2025), particularly through the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II (AADCP II) and its successor programs. ASEAN welcomed Australia's commitment to support ASEAN's economic recovery with high-quality infrastructure development and technical assistance, and address challenges through enhanced training, technical advice and cooperation. We further acknowledged Australia's support for the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) and noted the ongoing implementation of the ASEAN-Australia Smart Cities Initiative, including the establishment of a Smart Cities Trust Fund with the Asian Development Bank.
13. We recognized the relevance of sub-regional development, and contribution of sub-regional cooperation frameworks, to ASEAN's regional integration and community-building process, especially in narrowing the development gap and enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a region, enhancing regional connectivity and ensuring ASEAN's sustainable and equitable development. We shared the importance of stable, prosperous and resilient sub-regions for a cohesive, connected and integrated ASEAN Community. ASEAN welcomed Australia's active cooperation in the Mekong and other sub-regions of ASEAN. ASEAN appreciated Australia's engagements with ASEAN's sub-regional groupings and welcomed Australia's continued support to ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gap and promoting sustainable and equitable development across the ASEAN Community including through aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN, promoting quality infrastructure and sustainable water resources management and combating transnational crimes. ASEAN welcomed Australia's announcement of further scholarships for emerging leaders, strengthening of technology capabilities to support economic integration and development in the Mekong sub-region.
14. We agreed on the importance of people-to-people connectivity in safeguarding supply chains, enhancing regional cooperation, and maintaining stability. In this regard, Australia emphasised key target groups important to economic recovery

such as diplomats, essential business travellers, and international students, through pilot programs developed to enable the safe movement of these cohorts.

15. We acknowledged the strong people-to-people links between ASEAN and Australia and commended the success of a number of initiatives, including the 'Australia now ASEAN' public diplomacy program, the New Colombo Plan, Australia Awards, and programmes run by the Australia-ASEAN Council. We noted that the provision of long-term scholarships and short-term skill training programmes have been helpful in building ASEAN's human capital for development as well as in enhancing peoples-to-people linkages between ASEAN and Australia and looked forward to the continued collaboration in these areas, including digital entrepreneurship, science, technologies and innovation, in light of the fast evolving Fourth Industrial Revolution. We noted the importance of deepening social and cultural linkages and further strengthen people-to-people connections through digital education, distanced learning, and capacity building on ICT-related training and the sharing of best practices in utilising various ICT tools. We also encouraged cooperation in mental health issues, particularly on promoting community understanding and awareness as well as capacity building and aftercare services.
16. We acknowledged the importance of intercultural and interfaith dialogue and celebrating diversity, practising respect, trust and inclusion in our region. We welcomed ongoing practical cooperation to promote social inclusion, and disability rights. We agreed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment to realise sustained and inclusive peace, prosperity and economic development in our region.
17. ASEAN Leaders appreciated Australia's cooperation with ASEAN in addressing environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, including the conservation of forests and sustainable land management practices, and marine debris. ASEAN Leaders welcomed Australia's ongoing commitment to support regional disaster responses and appreciated Australia's continued support for the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), which included the technical support for the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT).
18. We discussed international and regional issues of common interest and concern. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We encouraged the substantive negotiations towards the early conclusion

of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS within a mutually-agreed timeline.

19. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Leaders over recent developments, including land reclamations, activities and serious incidents in the South China Sea, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions, and may undermine peace, security, and stability in the region. We reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation, as well as to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We further reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas are to be carried out.

20. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhance our shared work to shape a peaceful, stable, secure and prosperous region for our people, particularly in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery. We welcomed Australia's long-standing commitment and constructive approach to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region. We noted that ASEAN and Australia shares the importance of cooperation for comprehensive recovery as good neighbours and good friends. In this regard, we agreed to adopt the Joint Leaders' Statement of the Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit: A Strong Partnership for Recovery. As a reflection of the breadth and depth of our relationship, we also welcomed the decision to convene annual ASEAN-Australia Summits starting from 2021, which will mark a new chapter in our strategic partnership with Australia.

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