

Overview of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations

Introduction

ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations commenced when H.E. Qian Qichen, the then Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, attended the opening session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur as a guest of the Malaysian Government in which he expressed China's keen interest to cooperate with ASEAN for mutual benefit. Subsequently, China was accorded full Dialogue Partner status at the 29th AMM in July 1996 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

2. The relationship between ASEAN and China was elevated to a higher plane with the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity at the 7th ASEAN-China Summit in October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia. The first and second Plans of Action to implement the Joint Declaration (POA) were concluded in 2010 and 2015 respectively. The third POA with a timeframe of 2016-2020 was adopted ad-referendum in November 2015 by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and China.

3. China appointed its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN and established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta in September 2012.

4. The ASEAN-China Centre in Beijing was launched at the 14th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2011 in Bali. The Centre is a one-stop information centre to promote ASEAN-China cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, education, and culture. The virtual centre can be accessed at <http://www.asean-china-center.org/>. Five Meetings of the Joint Council of the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC) have been held in Beijing since 2011.

5. 2016 marked the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China dialogue relations. ASEAN Member States and China held a series of activities to commemorate this milestone. The celebrations culminated in a Commemorative Summit held back-to-back with the ASEAN Summit in September 2016 in Vientiane.

6. This year marks the 15th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership. A series of commemorative activities have been/will be conducted throughout the year and a strategic partnership vision 2030 will be issued at the 21st ASEAN-China Summit to commemorate the anniversary.

Political and Security Cooperation

7. ASEAN and China continue to enhance political-security dialogue and cooperation through various ASEAN Plus One mechanisms including summit, ministerial and senior officials' meetings, as well as in broader ASEAN-led frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus).

8. China was the first Dialogue Partner of ASEAN to accede to the TAC in October 2003. China's accession to the TAC has contributed to the stature of the TAC as the code of conduct for inter-state relations in the region. China was also

the first Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) which expressed its intention to accede to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ.

9. ASEAN and China signed the Declaration on the Conducts of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in November 2002 in Phnom Penh. ASEAN and China adopted the Guidelines to implement the DOC on 21 July 2011 in Bali, Indonesia. Further, the PMC Plus One Session with China held on 25 July 2016 in Vientiane endorsed the Joint Statement by Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China on the Full and Effective Implementation of the DOC which reflected its commitment to ensure the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety.

10. The 19th ASEAN-China Summit to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations the Leaders adopted the Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea, and the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the DOC. At their meeting on 6 August 2017 in Manila, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China adopted the framework of the Code of Conduct. At the 20th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2017, ASEAN Member States and China officially announced the launch of the COC negotiations. The 23rd ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC (JWG-DOC) held on 1-2 March 2018 in Nha Trang, Viet Nam, commenced the official negotiations on the COC. ASEAN and China agreed on a Single Draft Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) Negotiating Text at the 15th ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC (SOM-DOC) held in Changsha, China, on 27 June 2018, which will be the basis of COC negotiations.

11. ASEAN and China have been cooperating under the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) since it was established in 2010. The ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting have been held six times, and the 6th Meeting was held on 26 May 2016, at the sidelines of the 10th ADMM.

12. Annual consultations are held between ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and China and between the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and China to promote their cooperation in combating transnational crimes and other non-traditional security issues. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues signed in 2004 and renewed in 2009. A new MOU was signed at the 5th AMMTC + China Consultation in Manila on 21 September 2017.

Economic Cooperation

13. ASEAN-China economic relations continue to thrive. China is currently ASEAN's largest trading partner, third largest external source of foreign direct investment (FDI). Merchandise trade between ASEAN and China, reached USD 436.8 billion in 2017, accounting for 17.1 per cent of ASEAN's total merchandise

trade. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from China to ASEAN amounted to USD 11.3 billion in 2017 accounting for 8.2 per cent of total ASEAN's FDI.¹

14. The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed in November 2002 to establish the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA). The ACFTA was realised on 1 January 2010 and took full effect on 1 January 2015. In line with the mandate given by the Leaders to upgrade the ACFTA, the "Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation and Certain Agreements thereunder between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China" (ACFTA Upgrade Protocol) was signed on 21 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, at the sidelines of the 27th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits. The Protocol, which entered into force on 1 July 2016, is expected to bring ASEAN and China closer to realising their twin goals of two-way trade and investment of US\$1 trillion and US\$150 billion respectively by 2020.

15. The ASEAN-China EXPO (CAEXPO), an event which showcases products from ASEAN and China, has been organised and hosted by China on an annual basis in Nanning, China since 2004. At the margin of the CAEXPO, an ASEAN-China Business and Investment Summit (CABIS) was established to bring government and the private sector together to exchange views on matters affecting the economy and businesses of ASEAN Member States and China. The 14th CAEXPO was held on 12-15 September 2017 under the theme "Building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road", with the focus on trade, investment and the China-ASEAN Tourism Cooperation Year as an opportunity to promote the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (ACFTA).

16. ASEAN and China also agreed to expand cooperation to the area of production capacity cooperation. This would provide opportunities to further strengthen economic and trade relations and serve to boost confidence and increase engagement among businesses from ASEAN and China. ASEAN and China adopted a *Joint Statement between ASEAN and China on Production Capacity Cooperation* at the 19th ASEAN-China Summit to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations in September 2016.

17. ASEAN-China cooperation in agriculture focuses on enhancing cooperation in human resource development through a series of training courses on agricultural technologies to help train agricultural technicians and officials of ASEAN Member States. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ASEAN Secretariat and the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China on Agricultural Cooperation (2007-2011) was renewed on 27 September 2013 for a period of five years.

18. ASEAN and China continued to strengthen their cooperation in Information and Communication Technology. ASEAN and China in November 2013 signed an MOU on cooperation in ICT. The 11th TELMIN+China held in November 2016 in Bandar Seri Begawan, endorsed the Action Plan for Deepening the China-ASEAN

¹ ASEAN Trade Statistics Database as of end-April 2018; ASEAN FDI Database as of 25 May 2018, ASEAN Macroeconomic Database as of June 2018 and IMF World Economic Outlook Database as of April 2018

Partnership for Common Development in the ICT Field (2017-2021) to strengthen further China–ASEAN ICT cooperation towards promoting socio-economic development, particularly in the ever changing ICT environment.

19. ASEAN and China signed an MOU on Transport Cooperation in November 2004 in Vientiane. The MOU aims to promote medium and long-term cooperation. ASEAN and China signed two agreements on transport, namely i) ASEAN-China Maritime Transport Agreement (AC-MTA) signed on 2 November 2007 and ii) ASEAN-China Air Transport Agreement (AC-ATA) signed on 12 November 2010.

20. The 16th ASEAN and China Transport Ministers Meeting (ATM+China) held on 12 October 2017 in Singapore welcomed the signing of the MOU between the Authorities in charge of Aircraft Accident Investigation of ASEAN Member States and the Civil Aviation Administration of China on Cooperation relating to Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation, which aims to further strengthen cooperation in the safety investigation of aircraft accidents and incidents, investigation training, and sharing of safety information between ASEAN and China.

21. On tourism, China has become a major source of tourists for ASEAN. In 2016, the total number of tourist arrivals from China to ASEAN was 19.8 million, an increase of 6.4% compared to 2015, while the number of ASEAN tourists to China recorded 10.34 million, an increase of 57.8 %. Since the implementation of the ASEAN-China Air Transport Agreement and its protocols in early 2017, 37 cities in ASEAN have been connected with 52 cities in China through nearly 5,000 direct flights per week. 2017 was designated as ASEAN-China Year of Tourism Cooperation. The Joint Statement between ASEAN and China on Tourism Cooperation was adopted by the Leaders at the 20th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2017.

22. On cooperation in quality inspection, two MOUs on Strengthening Sanitary and Phytosanitary Cooperation (SPS) and Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment (TBT) between ASEAN and China were signed on 20 November 2007 and 24 October 2009, respectively. To implement the MOUs, ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine on SPS and TBT was established and held alternately every year. The 5th ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine was held on 10 September 2016 in Nanning, China emphasised their commitment to deepen cooperation through the implementation of SPS MOU Plan of Action for 2017-2018.

23. On cooperation in science and technology, notable progress has been made in the implementation of the ASEAN-China Science and Technology Partnership (STEP) Programme including building ASEAN-China joint laboratories, ASEAN-China Remote Sensing Satellite Data Sharing and Service Platform, ASEAN-China technology Transfer Centre, and Talented Young Scientists Visiting China.

24. 2018 has been designated as ASEAN-China Year of Innovation (YOI). The opening ceremony was launched on 12 April 2018 in Beijing. A series of activities have been/will be organized throughout the year to mark the YOI.

25. On connectivity, at 20th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2017, the ASEAN Leaders noted China's support to the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. The Leaders also noted ongoing efforts to explore synergies between ASEAN's MPAC 2025, China's Belt and Road Initiative, including through deepening the cooperation of infrastructure connectivity, and connectivity initiatives under the Greater Mekong Sub-region, and the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation.

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

26. On socio-cultural cooperation, a number of activities have been carried out in the areas of public health, education, culture, labour and social security, local government and people-to-people exchanges, environment, media, youth, social development, and poverty reduction.

27. The Ministers on Health of ASEAN and China signed an MOU on Health Cooperation at the Fourth ASEAN-China Health Ministers Meeting (AC-HMM) on 6 July 2012 in Phuket, Thailand. To operationalise the MoU, yearly priorities of collaboration are agreed by ASEAN and China through the ASEAN China Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (AC-SOMHD) and the ASEAN China Health Ministers Meeting. At the 6th AC-HMM on 7 September 2017 in Bandar Seri Begawan, the Ministers supported the inclusion of Health Promotion and eHealth/ICT as new priority areas under the ASEAN-China health cooperation for 2017-2018.

28. ASEAN-China cooperation on education continues to make good progress. The China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week (CAECW) has been held annually since 2008 in Guiyang, China. The 9th CAECW on 1–4 August 2016 included the convening of the 2nd China-ASEAN Education Ministers Round Table Conference on 3 August 2016 which adopted a Joint Communiqué on the Development of ASEAN-China Education Cooperation. As a follow-up to the Joint Communiqué, the Plan of Action for the ASEAN-China Cooperation on Education 2017-2020 was announced at the 10th CAECW in July 2017. The 11th CAECW was held on 25-29 July 2018 in Guiyang under the theme "A New Beginning for Educational Cooperation, A New Future for Cultural Exchange".

29. Programmes and activities to strengthen youth exchanges and cooperation between ASEAN and China are held regularly, including the China-ASEAN Youth Camp, GMS Youth Friendship Programme and the ASEAN Young Leaders Training Program. The activities aim to promote the mutual trust and understanding between the Chinese and ASEAN young people and contribute to the regional economic development and social cooperation.

30. Cooperation in culture is pursued through the implementation of Plans of Action on ASEAN-China Cultural Cooperation. At the Third ASEAN Plus China Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA+China) Meeting on 25 August 2016 in Bandar Seri Begawan, the ASEAN Ministers expressed their interest to continue cooperation with China in the areas of culture and the arts, cultural industries, cultural heritage safeguarding, public cultural service system, culture and technology development, and creativity across China, including Hong Kong and Macau. The ASEAN-China Cultural Forum continue to be held annually, with the

12th Forum held on 11-12 September 2017 in Nanning, China under the theme “Transmitting and Promoting Traditional Arts of China and ASEAN”.

31. Cooperation in environment is guided by the ASEAN-China Environmental Protection Cooperation Strategy papers. Implementation of activities under the action plans of the Cooperation Strategy is coordinated with the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre (CAEC), which was established in Beijing on 17 March 2010 and officially inaugurated on 24 May 2011. The first Cooperation Strategy paper covered the period 2009-2015 and after its conclusion, the succeeding Cooperation Strategy for 2016-2020 was endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN) and China. To operationalise the new Cooperation Strategy, the ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Action Plan (2016-2020) was adopted by the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment which was held on 12 September 2018 in Brunei Darussalam.

32. On disaster management, an MOU between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and ASEAN on Disaster Management Cooperation was signed on 6 October 2014. With the total committed grant assistance of RMB 50 million, the MOU aims to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme, the operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), and the ASEAN Secretariat’s capacity building programmes on disaster management.

33. ASEAN and China have continued to organise exchange visits for media personnel. On 16-18 September 2015, Thailand hosted the Visit of Broadcasting Personnel to Thailand with the funding under the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund. The visit had helped the participants to broaden their perspective of ASEAN and China broadcasting and enhance their media capability by learning new knowledge and practices, and by sharing skills and experiences among the participants. At the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting in August 2018 in Singapore, ASEAN supported China’s proposal to designate 2019 as the ASEAN-China Media Exchange Year.
