

Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-United States Strategic Partnership (2021-2025)

This Plan of Action (POA) guides implementation of the goals and objectives of the ASEAN-United States Strategic Partnership, taking into account the Joint Statement on the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership and the relevant Joint Statements of the ASEAN-U.S. Summits.

Building on a longstanding dialogue partnership since 1977 and to continue the achievements made under the previous Plan of Action (2016-2020), ASEAN and the United States, through this POA, are committed to further deepen relations in all pillars of cooperation. Both sides will also continue to support ASEAN integration as well as its efforts in realising the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together for a politically cohesive, economically integrated, socially responsible, and a truly people-oriented, people-centred and rules-based ASEAN, including by narrowing the development gap, enhancing ASEAN Connectivity and enhancing the United States' engagement with ASEAN in various existing fora and mechanisms.

The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), adopted at the 34th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, can serve as a guiding principle in promoting cooperation between ASEAN and the United States through the existing ASEAN-led mechanisms in the four key areas outlined in the AOIP namely (i) maritime cooperation, (ii) connectivity, (iii) UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, and (iv) economic and other possible areas of cooperation to contribute to peace, prosperity and development in the region.

A shared commitment to uphold principles such as ASEAN centrality and unity, openness, transparency, inclusivity, cohesiveness, resilience, rules-based frameworks, respect for sovereignty and international law, and good governance, should also guide cooperation between ASEAN and the United States. ASEAN and the United States are also committed to strengthen cooperation and coordination in addressing emerging regional and global challenges of common interest over the next five years.

ASEAN and the United States hereby endeavour to pursue cooperation in the following priority areas through the corresponding activities, in conformity with their obligations under international law and in accordance with their respective domestic laws, regulations, and policies.

1. POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

1.1. Political Cooperation

- 1.1.1 Continue to support ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture, as well as further promote shared values and norms, including those enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and the East Asia Summit (EAS) Declaration on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles), to contribute towards maintaining and promoting peace and stability in the region and beyond;
- 1.1.2 Support the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, while noting that the U.S. vision on the Indo-Pacific is committed to supporting the principles of the Outlook;
- 1.1.3 Strengthen existing mechanisms for consultation and cooperation between ASEAN and the United States, including the ASEAN-U.S. Summit, the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC+1) with the United States, the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue as well as the ASEAN-U.S. Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting;
- 1.1.4 Work closely to strengthen the EAS, with ASEAN as the driving force, as a premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic issues of common interest and concern, with the aim of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity and integration in the region;
- 1.1.5 Continue regular engagement among EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta on the implementation of Leaders' decisions as well as exchange information on regional development cooperation initiatives and security policies and initiatives;
- 1.1.6 Enhance cooperation to support ASEAN's efforts in peace and reconciliation in the region including the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, through relevant mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) in accordance with its Terms of Reference (TOR);

1.2. Security Cooperation

- 1.2.1. Promote dialogue, deepen consultations, and strengthen practical cooperation to address regional security challenges facing the region through ASEAN-led fora such as the EAS, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus);
- 1.2.2. Continue cooperation on preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding in the region. Further enhance cooperation with the ASEAN Member States and the U.S. on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to include continued support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ARF;
- 1.2.3. Actively contribute to the realisation of the goals and objectives set out in the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) in support of strengthening the ARF and advancing the ARF evolution from confidence-building measures to preventive diplomacy and to elaborate approaches to conflict resolution;
- 1.2.4. Continue the ongoing efforts of States Parties to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) and the Nuclear Weapon States to resolve the outstanding issues pertaining to the signing and ratifying of the Protocol to that Treaty;
- 1.2.5. Explore cooperation in strengthening nuclear safety, security and safeguards consistent with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safety, security, and safeguards standards and guidelines, through capacity building and sharing of experience and best practices;
- 1.2.6. Strengthen cooperation in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology in a safe and secure manner, and reinforce the regional non-proliferation regime and enhance the region's preparedness and response for a nuclear or radiological emergency;
- 1.2.7. Promote cooperation to address humanitarian aspects of landmines and other explosive remnants of war issues in the region, through possible financial and technical support for the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) as well as the work of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action;

- 1.2.8. Continue to strengthen defense exchanges and cooperation through dialogues at different levels, mutual visits, training, capacity building and other practical cooperation through the relevant and existing regional security frameworks;
- 1.2.9. Promote dialogue and strengthen practical cooperation in areas including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping, military medicine, humanitarian mine action, and cyber security through the ADMM-Plus framework, so as to build regional capacity, enhance mutual trust and confidence building measures in dealing with security challenges in a rules-based ASEAN;
- 1.2.10. Subject to the ADMM's approval, to continue promoting dialogue through the ASEAN-US Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting and further strengthen practical cooperation in the agreed areas of cooperation under the ADMM, so as to enhance mutual trust and confidence building measures in a rules-based ASEAN;
- 1.2.11. Build the capacity of women as peace builders, including as mediators and negotiators at the international, regional, national, and community levels as appropriate; in particular, through the promotion of the role of women as essential voices and active participants in society. Strengthen the work of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) consistent with its terms of reference;
- 1.2.12. Promote, where feasible, dialogue, information sharing, best practices, and capacity building on international law to enhance cooperation in all security domains facilitating upholding the rule of law and deepening integration and unity;
- 1.2.13. Explore cooperation between ASEAN and the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS) through activities conducted by the DKI APCSS, to address regional and global security issues and enhance security cooperation through programs of executive education, professional exchange, and building relationships of trust and confidence;
- 1.2.14. Promote conferences, workshops and dialogues through engagement with foreign policy research institutes to stimulate discussions and generate sound, actionable and pragmatic policy recommendations on security and policy issues;

1.2.15. Promote and strengthen women’s meaningful participation in peacekeeping efforts, security cooperation efforts, and all peace and security decision-making processes across the ASEAN region;

1.2.16. Continue to support ASEAN in strengthening its cybersecurity capacity and enhancing regional stability in cyberspace, including through the implementation of the ASEAN-U.S. Leaders’ Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, the ASEAN-U.S. Cyber Policy Dialogue, and the U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership;

1.3. Transnational Crime and Counter-Terrorism

1.3.1. Continue to convene regular ASEAN Plus the United States of America Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC + U.S.) Consultations to further strengthen cooperation in combatting transnational crime;

1.3.2. Enhance cooperation to prevent and combat transnational crimes in areas such as illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, people-smuggling, money laundering, arms smuggling, sea piracy and armed robbery against ships, counter-terrorism and violent extremism, cybercrime, international economic crime and illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, including by utilising existing regional and international institutions and agreements such as the regular SOMTC + U.S. Consultations, where appropriate, and by promoting the exchange of best practices and organising training and capacity building activities for law enforcement agencies through the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) and other relevant mechanisms;

1.3.3. Continue to promote cooperation to tackle illicit drug trafficking and enhance measures and to reduce drug demand through the adoption of evidence-based prevention policies and interventions, in line with the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025, and the 2019 East Asia Summit Leaders’ Statement on Combating The Spread of Illicit Drugs;

1.3.4. Continue to support ASEAN in the implementation of the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism, ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counter Terrorism and ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018 – 2025), including supporting the implementation of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019-2025),

including but not limited to the role of women and education in countering violent extremism (CVE) and rehabilitation and reintegration for families and communities of foreign terrorist fighter returnees, and participating in the ADMM-Plus Expert Working Group on Counter Terrorism;

- 1.3.5. Promote sharing of information and enhance exchange of experiences and best practices, as well as capacity building measures through mutual visits, training courses, workshops, seminars, and video conferencing between relevant agencies of ASEAN and the United States on counterterrorism, cybercrimes and transnational crimes;
- 1.3.6. Support ASEAN-led Transnational Crime and Counter Terrorism focused initiatives such as the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTTC), ASEAN Regional Forum Counter Terrorism Workshops and ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter Terrorism;

1.4. Maritime Cooperation

- 1.4.1. Deepen ASEAN-U.S. maritime cooperation, including maritime security, maritime domain awareness, information-sharing, search and rescue and safety of navigation in the region through appropriate and relevant ASEAN mechanisms and ASEAN-led fora such as the EAS, the ADMM-Plus, the ARF, and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and where appropriate, promote technical cooperation, shared awareness, capacity building, exchange of experience and sharing of knowledge and expertise;
- 1.4.2. Promote maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce, mutual trust and confidence, exercise of self-restraint, the non-use of force or of the threat to use force, and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO);
- 1.4.3. Continue to support ASEAN Member States through multilateral maritime law enforcement capacity building efforts through the conduct of regional courses,

seminars and workshops and other events or support activities intended to strengthen maritime cooperation, including on combating transnational crime;

1.4.4. Promote deeper understanding of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) through workshops, seminars and dialogues;

1.4.5. Advance cooperation and dialogue in areas such as conservation of the marine environment, safety of navigation and communication at sea, and search and rescue operations;

1.4.6. Encourage collaborative activities/programmes between ASEAN and US maritime institutions and other related institutions on the area of marine science;

1.5. Good Governance and Human Rights

1.5.1. Support ASEAN's efforts in promoting good governance and the rule of law, including through the sharing of experiences and best practices;

1.5.2. Support ASEAN Member States in anti-corruption efforts, through inter-alia, the implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and ASEAN Parties Against Corruption;

1.5.3. Support the work and mandate of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), through its priority programmes and activities, including capacity building for the promotion and protection of human rights;

1.5.4. Support the implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the implementation by States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to promote and support enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities;

2. ECONOMIC COOPERATION

2.1. Trade and Investment

2.1.1. Work cooperatively on the implementation of the ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (ASEAN-U.S. TIFA) and the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Work Plan in order to enhance ASEAN-U.S.

economic engagement and support the ASEAN Economic Community's goals;

- 2.1.2. Continue regular dialogues and consultations between the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and their Senior Officials to explore and realise ways to further deepen trade and investment ties in areas of mutual interest;
- 2.1.3. Promote interaction and engagement between ASEAN and U.S. businesses through activities conducted by the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council (USABC), the American Chambers of Commerce and the U.S.-ASEAN Connect to explore and utilise trade and investment opportunities, as well as to maximise the private sector's involvement in promoting two-way trade and investment and to facilitate information exchanges on enabling environment topics such as standards;

2.2. Finance Cooperation

- 2.2.1. Explore cooperation on financial infrastructure development and capital market development to create strong and robust economic and financial fundamentals for sustainable and balanced growth;
- 2.2.2. Explore supporting regional financial development and integration through capacity building with a view to strengthening the competitiveness of ASEAN financial institutions and enhancing the capacity of financial regulators;
- 2.2.3. Promote financial inclusion in the ASEAN region to strengthen the financial system and support trade in goods and services;

2.3. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

- 2.3.1. Strengthen cooperation in the field of intellectual property (IP), including support for the implementation of the ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Strategic Action Plan (2016-2025), the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework Action Plan 2019-2025, and the ASEAN Innovation Roadmap 2019-2025 and its Implementation Plan;
- 2.3.2. Support ASEAN Member States' efforts in achieving increased IP awareness, effective IP protection and enforcement consistent with agreed international

standards and international agreements to which ASEAN Member States are parties through capacity building and technical assistance;

- 2.3.3. Promote continued cooperation between the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AWGIPC), the ASEAN Network of IP Enforcement Experts (ANIEE), and the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and continue implementation of the ASEAN IPR Enforcement Action Plan;

2.4. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

- 2.4.1. Support the implementation of the ASEAN Post-2015 Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (2016-2025), as well as the development of MSMEs in ASEAN towards being globally competitive, resilient and innovative;
- 2.4.2. Increase the participation of women in the economy, including through MSMEs, with a particular focus on supporting women entrepreneurs and improving the business enabling environment in support of women's economic participation in MSMEs by promoting financial and digital inclusion;
- 2.4.3. Continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building through activities such as exchange programmes to develop ASEAN entrepreneurs, with particular focus on women, youth, and persons with disabilities to enable them to compete regionally and globally;
- 2.4.4. Support and promote the Network of Experts on Inclusive Entrepreneurship for ASEAN, which provides a platform for relevant stakeholders to exchange opinions, knowledge and ideas on implementation mechanisms that promote inclusive entrepreneurship through the development of social entrepreneurship programs;
- 2.4.5. Continue to promote sharing of information, best practices and technical assistance related to e-commerce, e-learning platforms, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) knowledge and skills, and identify ways to improve access to finance and alternative financing, particularly for start-ups and promote digital inclusion for women and youth;
- 2.4.6. Improve the competitiveness of MSMEs by facilitating access to technologies, sharing of best practices, developing human capital in the areas of digital technology commercialisation;

- 2.4.7. Encourage the expansion of financing support mechanisms for MSMEs to stimulate trade;

2.5. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- 2.5.1. Support ASEAN in the implementation of the ASEAN Digital Master Plan (ADMP) 2025, the ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, and the ASEAN-U.S. ICT workplan;
- 2.5.2. Work closely to broaden and deepen cooperation on mutually identified areas of cooperation under the ASEAN-U.S. ICT workplan and to promote an open, interoperable, reliable and secure ICT environment that fosters efficiency, innovation, communication and economic prosperity, as well as promote growth in the digital economy;
- 2.5.3. Support ASEAN's efforts in bridging the digital divide and ICT development gaps within ASEAN, and promoting the development of a secure, resilient and innovative 5G ecosystem and networks;

2.6. Transport

- 2.6.1. Continue to strengthen and broaden cooperation in enhancing transport infrastructure, networks and operations, safety and technology including through exchanges of best practices and support for the implementation of the ASEAN Transport Strategic Plan 2016-2025;
- 2.6.2. Promote cooperation and knowledge sharing through exchanges such as U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership on safer road and mobility including infrastructure design for safer roads, regulatory best practices and the economic implications of road infrastructure safety design to societies to support ASEAN's effort to reduce road fatalities in the region;
- 2.6.3. Support the implementation of the ASEAN Single Aviation Market through enhancement of aviation cooperation, in accordance with relevant international standards, in the areas of aviation safety and efficiency, aviation security, and economic regulation of aviation;

2.7. Energy

- 2.7.1. Support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation 2016-2025 (APAEC);
- 2.7.2. Continue consultations between the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Energy (SOME) and the U.S. to further strengthen ASEAN-U.S. energy cooperation;
- 2.7.3. Enhance regional energy cooperation, including on energy security and sustainability, and expand exchanges within the APAEC framework to promote access to sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy;
- 2.7.4. Encourage further development of energy transition technologies and investment in sustainable energy infrastructure;
- 2.7.5. Promote the sharing of information, knowledge, experience on technology, exchange of best practices and support regional capacity building on energy regulatory frameworks and technical standards, energy efficiency, renewable energy, natural gas and petroleum;

2.8. Food, Agriculture and Forestry

- 2.8.1. Support Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (2016-2025);
- 2.8.2. Continue cooperation with the Senior Officials Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF) and its subsidiary bodies in areas of mutual interest;
- 2.8.3. Support the facilitation of concerted and coordinated enforcement efforts and joint actions in the ASEAN Working Group on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Wildlife Enforcement (AWG-CITES and WE) including increasing communication and coordination with the SOMTC Working Group on Illicit Trafficking of Wildlife and Timber;
- 2.8.4. Promote cooperation to develop, implement, and enforce standard practices to reduce risks of zoonotic disease transmission from wildlife, especially as

sold for consumption, and strengthen mechanisms for monitoring, early warning, surveillance, prevention, and control of zoonotic diseases;

2.8.5. Strengthen cooperation to enhance ASEAN capacity in monitoring and controlling Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and promote sustainable and responsible fisheries;

2.8.6. Enhance regional cooperation in addressing the impact of climate change, natural disasters, energy poverty and other challenges affecting food security;

2.9. Science and Technology

2.9.1. Encourage science and technology, people, and knowledge exchanges, where appropriate through capacity building engaging both the United States' and ASEAN's science and technology authorities and scientists;

2.9.2. Continue to develop human capital in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), with a focus on women and youth, and promote women in science through the ASEAN-U.S. Science Prize for Women;

2.9.3. Encourage collaboration and continue to expand research partnerships with universities, research institutions, research centres, and industry for basic and applied research, and encourage further exchanges, including through the ASEAN-U.S. Science & Technology Fellows Programme;

2.9.4. Encourage engagement among private sector, government and the general public by the relevant end-user domains so as to explore joint undertakings in appropriate and commercially viable science, technology and innovation initiatives, that address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

3. SOCIO-CULTURAL COOPERATION

3.1. Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance

3.1.1. Continue cooperation on disaster management to enhance disaster awareness and to strengthen capabilities in disaster risk reduction, mitigation, prevention, preparedness, and emergency response and relief, as well as recovery under the ambit of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025;

- 3.1.2. Support ASEAN's work in the coordination and mobilisation of humanitarian assistance, and strengthen the existing ASEAN mechanisms through exchange of expertise and knowledge;
- 3.1.3. Explore cooperation and knowledge sharing to support ASEAN Member States in strengthening the capacity and policy frameworks for effective disaster management and emergency response initiatives, and strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and the United States to realising the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management;
- 3.1.4. Continue the collaboration with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) particularly to support the role of AHA Centre in responding to disasters and coordination of humanitarian assistance during emergency situations;
- 3.1.5. Encourage regular consultations between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the United States to facilitate synergy among multilateral cooperation mechanisms on disaster management, including in the ARF Framework;

3.2. Environment

- 3.2.1. Promote cooperation in biodiversity conservation and management in the region particularly through implementing the action plan under the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB) and encouraging collaboration with existing institutions such as the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the ASEAN Flyway Network;
- 3.2.2. Promote cooperation and exchange of experience and best practices, including institutional and human capacity building, in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, water and waste management as well as pollution control, land and/or forest fire prevention, mitigation and management, environment awareness promotion, and environmental monitoring and impact assessment;
- 3.2.3. Support the implementation of action lines under the Action Plan of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC), which aims to strengthen the capacity of ASEAN Member States to address climate change issues by implementing mitigation, and adaptation actions, including the development of climate resilient cities;

- 3.2.4. Support air quality improvement in the ASEAN region, including by exploring cooperation to address transboundary haze pollution issues in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, through initiatives and action in strengthening national capabilities and regional cooperation, as well as capacity building on land and/or forest fire mitigation, prevention and preparedness;
- 3.2.5. Promote regional cooperation on the sustainable management of coastal and marine environment, including addressing threats to marine ecosystems;
- 3.2.6. Promote regional collaboration with an effective holistic approach to combat marine debris, in line with the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Combating Marine Plastic Debris, while noting ASEAN instruments, as appropriate, such as the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, and the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris;
- 3.2.7. Strengthen cooperation in addressing issues regarding the hazardous wastes management and other wastes as well as other issues relating to threats to the environment;

3.3. Public Health

- 3.3.1. Share best practices and experiences through the ASEAN Health Cluster Mechanism which may include seminars, workshops, and training in the areas of public health and global health security, covering topics such as ASEAN's preparedness for and response to outbreaks of infectious diseases, pandemic preparation, effective risk communication, transparency and openness in sharing timely and accurate information, and other potential public health threats, including supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda;
- 3.3.2. Conduct joint research to better prevent, detect, and respond to novel infectious diseases, and share experiences in development, evaluation and approval of new vaccines and therapeutics through public-private partnerships, especially in case of pandemic situations;
- 3.3.3. Strengthen health system capacity by building health systems that support a vibrant, healthy citizenry and address emerging health risks and threats in a transparent and open manner, and by fostering public-private partnerships to

promote healthy populations, including in the response to the threat of Multi-Drug Resistance of Tuberculosis-MDR-TB;

- 3.3.4. Develop human capital in the health sector by fostering the next generation of health care professionals, and by expanding training and exchange opportunities, such as the Health Futures Alumni Network, to continue to build the skills of the health workforce;
- 3.3.5. Increase cooperation in public health by establishing relationships between the ASEAN Health Sector and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and its relevant agencies and institutions and continue engagement under the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures initiative;
- 3.3.6. Continue cooperation with the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) through trainings, exercises, and people-to-people exchanges;

3.4. Education and Youth

- 3.4.1. Strengthen engagement between ASEAN and U.S. higher education institutions, staff and students and promote awareness of and studies on topics of importance to ASEAN and the United States, including through the Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Program and other scholarship and exchange programmes;
- 3.4.2. Encourage cooperation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and human resource development towards Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and developing standards and the quality of the workforce to meet the demands of the global labour market, for the benefit of the people in the region;
- 3.4.3. Continue capacity building programmes, including U.S.-ASEAN Internship Program, scholarships for postgraduate studies and English language training, for educators and civil servants in ASEAN;
- 3.4.4. Continue ASEAN-U.S. youth exchange programmes, such as the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) and the YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam, to strengthen networking and leadership development among youth and harness their potential to engage on regional issues;

- 3.4.5. Support ASEAN's efforts to cultivate youth entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation as well as volunteerism, through programmes that are in line with the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025;

3.5. Culture

- 3.5.1. Promote awareness on the safeguarding of intangible and tangible cultural heritage as well as understanding and appreciation of each other's arts and culture;
- 3.5.2. Support cultural exchanges as a means to promote mutual understanding and strengthen people-to-people ties;
- 3.5.3. Provide support for programmes related to the promotion of ASEAN awareness and identity such as the ASEAN Communication Master Plan II (2018-2025);

3.6. Social Welfare and Gender

- 3.6.1. Support the work of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and their priority areas, including the implementation of Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN which also contributes to its regional Plans of Action (RPAs);
- 3.6.2. Promote exchange of information and best practices, as well as technical cooperation and capacity building in gender equality, gender-responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, the care and protection of children and youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups;
- 3.6.3. Explore cooperation to promote and protect the rights of women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups;
- 3.6.4. Integrate gender equality, with due consideration given to addressing gender equality in the context of disability, in relevant activities and promote gender mainstreaming in ASEAN-U.S. cooperation, where appropriate;

- 3.6.5. Explore cooperation and capacity building programmes for social workers and social service workforce, including through the ASEAN Training Centre for Social Work and Social Welfare (ATCSW);
- 3.6.6. Support ASEAN's efforts on implementing the ASEAN Declaration on the Culture of Prevention for a peaceful, resilient, healthy and harmonious society, to promote and uphold the values of tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for life and diversity;
- 3.6.7. Increase efforts to promote women's empowerment in all sectors of society and gender equality across ASEAN with a particular focus on Women, Peace, and Security, women's economic empowerment, and gender-based violence prevention and response;

3.7. Human Capital Development

- 3.7.1. Sharing of knowledge, technical cooperation and capacity building in human capital development to support ASEAN Member States including various forms of education and training to prepare ASEAN human resources for the changing world of work;
- 3.7.2. Support skills development for the industries of today and the future, and develop access to capital, mentorship, and technical assistance, especially for women entrepreneurs;
- 3.7.3. Provide executive-level seminars focused on technology and innovation; public policy; and entrepreneurship to young public- and private-sector leaders through established institutions in Southeast Asia;

4. CROSS-PILLAR COOPERATION

4.1 Connectivity

- 4.1.1 Enhance cooperation to strengthen the ASEAN Connectivity agenda, through participation in the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 as well as promote linkages between different connectivity initiatives within and beyond the region;
- 4.1.2 Encourage robust private sector investments in infrastructure projects and capacity building to develop economically, socially and environmentally viable

projects, including through cooperation with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and through supporting ASEAN to co-organise project discussion roundtables and promoting public private partnership (PPP) schemes and other financing modalities, towards achieving a seamlessly and comprehensively connected and integrated ASEAN;

- 4.1.3 Support ASEAN's efforts toward a digitally-enabled economy that is secure, sustainable and transformative, including through the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP), particularly where there are possible linkages with the MPAC 2025, and to further leverage ICTs as well as new technological developments to enable an innovative, smart and sustainable urbanisation;

4.2 Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and Narrowing the Development Gap (NDG)

- 4.2.1 Continue to support ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gap within and between ASEAN Member States, through the implementation of IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025) as well as alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development in order to realise the ASEAN Community and regional integration;
- 4.2.2 Continue to support CLMV countries in the implementation of the IAI Work Plan through areas such as human resource development by increasing the development scholarships, vocational education, and training programmes;

4.3 Smart Cities

- 4.3.1 Support the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) in building a network of smart cities that are resilient, innovative and well-connected, using various means including technology to improve the lives of people in the region in an inclusive and sustainable manner;
- 4.3.2 Explore partnerships and collaboration with the ASCN and ASCN cities on mutual areas of interest through the U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership (USASCP);
- 4.3.3 Explore opportunities to engage with U.S. and ASEAN private sector to promote knowledge exchanges and develop partnership to advance sustainable development and investment to improve the provision of

essential services and quality of life, including through the ASCN;

4.4 Development Cooperation

- 4.4.1 Continue to support the realisation of goals under the three ASEAN Community pillars, through regional ASEAN-U.S. cooperation programmes and projects, including the ASEAN-USAID Partnership for Regional Optimisation within the Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT) and the ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade, and E-commerce (IGNITE) and future initiatives;
- 4.4.2 Increase regional cooperation and promote economic development under the Mekong – U.S. Partnership (MUSP) and support the convening of Ministerial and Senior Officials Meetings, as appropriate, between the United States and Mekong countries on an annual basis, to address issues of common interests, and coordinate with international partners such as the Friends of the Mekong, in the priority areas as outlined in the MUSP Foundational Document, including environmental protection, sustainable water management, health, education, gender equality, agriculture and food security, energy security, connectivity, non-traditional security, as well as increasing engagement with the Mekong River Commission (MRC);
- 4.4.3 Support ASEAN institutions and mechanisms that help facilitate sustainable development cooperation in the region, including the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD);

4.5. Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat

- 4.5.1. Continue to support the strengthening of the ASEAN Secretariat by providing training and capacity-building courses for its staff;

5. FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM

- 5.1.1. This POA will be taken forward with the support, where appropriate, of funding mechanisms available through the governments of the U.S. and ASEAN Member States;
- 5.1.2. Review of this POA is to be made through the existing mechanisms of the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations, including the ASEAN-U.S. JCC Meeting and the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue; and

5.1.3. Submit progress reports of the implementation of the POA to the annual ASEAN PMC+1 with the U.S.
