



## **JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING BANGKOK, 31 JULY 2019**

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met on 31 July 2019 at the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) in Bangkok. We underlined the need to further strengthen cooperation and advance our partnership to ensure sustainability in all dimensions for ASEAN amidst the rapid changes in Southeast Asia and beyond.

### **ASEAN COMMUNITY-BUILDING**

2. We reaffirmed our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining ASEAN centrality and unity in our community-building efforts, engagement with external partners and regional architecture. We commended the ongoing work of all ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Organs for progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprints 2025, and looked forward to the mid-term review of the three Community Blueprints to be undertaken by 2020. We also commended the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. We remained committed to further promoting cooperation and partnerships for sustainability within ASEAN and with ASEAN's external partners to realise our ultimate goal of a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind, looks to the future and remains central in the regional architecture. We recognised the importance of innovative technologies in maximising the opportunities brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), while staying resilient and responsive to emerging challenges, including environmental and climate change issues and non-traditional security threats.
3. We reaffirmed our shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

4. We reaffirmed our belief that regionalism and multilateralism are important principles and frameworks of cooperation, and that their strength and value lie in their inclusivity, rules-based nature and emphasis on mutual benefit and respect.
5. We reaffirmed the necessity to narrow the development gap within ASEAN, including the digital gap, to deepen economic integration. In this connection, we were pleased with the progress in the implementation of the IAI Work Plan III (2016-2020), with 19 out of 26 actions (73.1%) being addressed, to meet ASEAN-wide targets and narrow development gaps within ASEAN. We called for efforts to be intensified to implement the remaining action lines of the IAI Work Plan III. We also noted the significant progress made by the Cambodia-Lao PDR-Myanmar-Viet Nam (CLMV) countries in the past two decades, since the IAI was launched, particularly in economic development, poverty reduction and productive employment as reflected in the Report on the Assessment of the Progress in Narrowing the Development Gap in ASEAN. We recognised the need to continue to mobilise our resources, along with those of ASEAN's partners, including international organisations and the private sector to implement the current Work Plan in a timely and effective manner. We also looked forward to the development of a new Work Plan that would continue deepening and broadening ASEAN integration.
6. We acknowledged the important role and contribution of sub-regional cooperation frameworks such as the Ayeyawady–Chao Phraya–Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Brunei–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Cambodia–Laos–Myanmar–Viet Nam (CLMV) cooperation, the Cambodia–Laos–Viet Nam Development Triangle Area, and Singapore–Johor–Riau (SIJORI) Growth Triangle. We encouraged closer coordination between ASEAN sectoral bodies and sub-regional cooperation frameworks in achieving our goal of narrowing the development gap among and within ASEAN Member States.
7. We reaffirmed our commitment to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Task Force (HLTF) on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs, with an aim to complete the outstanding action lines by the end of this year. In this connection, we welcomed the progress on the completion of the new ASEAN Secretariat Building in Jakarta to be inaugurated on 8 August 2019 coinciding with the 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary which seeks to advance the work of ASEAN and deepen the community-building process. We encouraged more ASEAN meetings to be conducted at the new building to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and ASEAN's partners and to underline ASEAN unity and centrality. We also reiterated that efforts to streamline and improve work processes and coordination in ASEAN would continue beyond 2019, with a view to fully and effectively implementing the ASEAN Charter and achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

8. We noted the steady progress in enhancing regional connectivity and supporting ASEAN Community-building through the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. We were pleased with the progress in establishing the Initial Rolling Priority Pipeline of Potential ASEAN Infrastructure Projects as well as the interest and support expressed by our Dialogue Partners and other external partners towards advancing sustainable infrastructure and looked forward to its official launch. We welcomed the ongoing efforts on the development of an ASEAN database of priority trade routes and a framework to enhance supply chain efficiency that would enhance regional economic integration and production network. We sought to develop links and synergies between MPAC 2025, and other connectivity strategies in the region in order to strengthen physical, institutional and people-to-people linkages under the “connecting the connectivities” approach. We commended the efforts and support of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC), National Coordinators, National Focal Points, relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, Dialogue Partners and other external partners in the effective implementation of MPAC 2025. To ensure that MPAC 2025 brings about concrete outcomes and meaningful impacts, we underscored the need for a robust monitoring, review and evaluation of its implementation and called on the continuing support of all stakeholders to achieve the vision of a connected and integrated ASEAN.
9. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing sustainable development cooperation, including with Dialogue Partners and external partners, by promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Complementarities Initiative) including through the development of a “Roadmap of Action for the Complementarities Initiative” and other feasible projects that could generate concrete benefits for the people of the region. We further reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening partnerships between ASEAN, regional organisations and UN Regional Commissions, UN Development System and other international organisations in achieving sustainable development for the region. We commended the 3<sup>rd</sup> High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, held on 29 March 2019 in Bangkok. We also looked forward to the launch of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD) in Bangkok in November 2019.
10. We welcomed the progress in the work by the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN). We welcomed the ASCN Roundtable Meeting and Conference on Smart and Sustainable Cities on 6-7 June 2019 in Bangkok. We noted the continued efforts by the ASCN Cities to implement their respective Smart City Action Plans. We underscored the potential of the ASCN to create opportunities for the development of technological and innovative solutions to support the smart and sustainable development of cities in the region, while promoting greater cultural understanding. We also welcomed Dialogue Partners and other external partners including those in the G20 to actively engage with the ASCN.

## **ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY**

### **Implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025**

11. We noted with satisfaction the encouraging progress made in the implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025, with 93 % of the action lines having been acted upon, representing an increase of 11 % from last year (82%). We encouraged the relevant sectoral bodies to continue to work expeditiously in addressing the remaining action lines.

### **Terrorism and Violent Extremism**

12. In our efforts to effectively prevent and counter terrorism, the rise of radicalisation and violent extremism in all forms and manifestations that lead to terrorism, we welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (ASEAN PoA PCRVE) 2018-2025 at the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC). We looked forward to the continued efforts to counter the multi-faceted threat of radicalisation and violent extremism, including through the development of the cross-sectoral and cross-pillar Work Plan of the ASEAN PoA PCRVE 2018-2025, which will enhance collaboration amongst ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and ASEAN Dialogue Partners, and complement other regional and international efforts under the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

### **Non-Traditional Threats**

13. We commended the work of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and the commitment of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD) to take the lead in the cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination to address illicit drug production, trafficking and use. We reaffirmed ASEAN's aspiration of a Drug-Free ASEAN and reiterated our commitment towards this end at the 6<sup>th</sup> AMMD on 18 October 2018 in Ha Noi. We welcomed the Joint ASEAN Statement against Legalisation of Controlled Drugs at the 5<sup>th</sup> Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) Intersessional Meeting in November 2018 and the ASEAN Joint Statement delivered at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CND in March 2019, which reaffirmed ASEAN unity in maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to illicit drugs and promoting communities free of drug abuse, despite the shift in drug policies seen in other parts of the world advocating the de-criminalisation or legalisation of drugs. We also expressed appreciation to the ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Center (ASEAN-NARCO) for publishing the annual ASEAN Drug Monitoring (ADM) Report and looked forward to the launching of the ADM Report 2018 at the sidelines of the 40<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASOD.
14. We commended the commitment of the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) to take the lead in the cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination to address counter terrorism and trafficking in persons in a more holistic manner. We

are also pleased to note the progress in the implementation of the multi-sectoral Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan (2017-2020). We also noted with appreciation the continued support of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and external parties across various areas of cooperation related to transnational crime. We welcomed the successful convening of the 19<sup>th</sup> SOMTC and Related Meetings on 22-26 July 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw and looked forward to the convening of the 13<sup>th</sup> AMMTC in Thailand, this year to strengthen our collective efforts and commitments in addressing the existing challenges.

15. We welcomed efforts to strengthen cooperation on border management as reflected in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and in accordance with respective domestic laws and policies, to better safeguard the increasingly interconnected and integrated ASEAN Community by having the relevant sectoral bodies discuss common concerns such as transnational crimes, trafficking in persons, illegal timber and wildlife trafficking, illicit drug trafficking and cross-border challenges including pandemics. To this end, we welcomed the efforts by relevant sectoral bodies to further enhance the effectiveness of existing relevant ASEAN mechanisms on border management cooperation.
16. We welcomed the adoption of the Declaration on the Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Member States' Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of Other ASEAN Member States by our Leaders at the 33rd ASEAN Summit and the Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Member States Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of Other ASEAN Member States by the 12<sup>th</sup> AMMTC in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 October 2018. We encouraged the implementation of the Guidelines, based on its general principles, which demonstrates ASEAN's efforts as a people-oriented, people-centred Community and enhances ASEAN's abilities to provide assistance to our nationals.
17. We recognised the growing sophistication and transboundary nature of cyber threats and underlined the need to address cybersecurity challenges in a holistic manner to ensure an open, secure, stable, accessible and resilient cyberspace to support the digital economy. We emphasised the need to enhance regional cybersecurity cooperation through a feasible coordination mechanism on cybersecurity across the three ASEAN Community pillars, implementing practical confidence-building measures and adopting the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, including the Ministers' guidance in developing an ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, as well as supporting the cybersecurity activities and training programmes of the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) in Singapore and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) in Bangkok, which will complement existing ASEAN efforts in cybersecurity capacity building.

## **Peace and Security**

18. We reaffirmed our commitment to promoting sustainable security in the region by reinforcing strategic trust and mutual confidence within ASEAN and in the wider Asia-Pacific region and reaffirming the principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as well as its application to this wider region. We are committed to further promoting the principles embodied in the TAC and emphasised the importance of all High Contracting Parties fulfilling their obligations under the Treaty. We welcomed Peru's accession to the TAC. We also welcomed the growing interest of non-regional countries to accede to the TAC on the basis of respect for and in conformity with the purposes and principles of the TAC. We also agreed to consider new applications in accordance with the Revised Guidelines for Accession to the TAC.
19. We acknowledged the continued contribution of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM-Plus in maintaining regional peace and stability. We welcomed the defence sectoral's theme this year on Sustainable Security; strengthening, consolidating and optimising defence cooperation; and supporting cross-pillar activities. We were pleased to note further progress in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, peace-keeping operations, counter-terrorism, military medicine, humanitarian mine action and cyber security. In this regard, we looked forward to the operationalisation of the ASEAN Our Eyes and welcomed the adoption of the Guidelines for Maritime Interaction. We also welcomed the expansion of ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI) to the Plus Countries to address security challenges in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, strengthen strategic cooperation, provide a platform for dialogue, and enhance regional confidence and security building measures. We congratulated the ADMM-Plus for the successful conduct dialogues and major exercises, which contributed to the progress of practical cooperation and continued the work of the Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) for the 2017-2020 cycle, and wished the incoming Co-Chairs of the EWGs a fruitful 2020-2023 cycle. We also commended the inclusion of the ASEAN Center of Military Medicine (ACMM) as a subsidiary body under the ADMM and the annualisation of ASEAN Military Medicine Conference (AMMC) which promotes sharing of best practices in the field of military medicine research amongst ASEAN Member States.
20. We were pleased to note that the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Law Ministers' Meeting (ALAWMM) held on 9-12 October 2018 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, endorsed the Model ASEAN Extradition Treaty and mandated the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM) to commence work on an ASEAN Extradition Treaty as a next step to strengthen ASEAN's resilience and capacity to combat transnational crimes, and enhance cooperation within ASEAN to ensure respect for the rule of law. We also welcomed the successful outcome of the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Attorneys-General/Ministers of Justice and Minister of Law on the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (Among Like-Minded ASEAN Member Countries) (AG-MLAT) held on 25 April 2019 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and its endorsement of the elevation of the

Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (Among Like-Minded ASEAN Member Countries) into an ASEAN Treaty. We further welcomed the renaming of the AG-MLAT and the Senior Officials' Meeting on the Treaty of Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (Among Like-Minded ASEAN Member Countries) (SOM-MLAT) to, respectively, the ASEAN Ministers/Attorneys-General Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (AMAG-MLAT) and the Senior Officials' Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (SOM-MLAT), and looked forward to their inclusion under Annex 1 of the ASEAN Charter under the APSC pillar. We looked forward to the second edition of the ASEAN Law Academy to be held in Singapore from 15 – 23 August 2019.

21. We welcomed the endorsement of the draft Practical Arrangements (PA) between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by the ASEAN SOM and looked forward to the signing of the PA, which will serve as the overall framework for future collaboration in the areas of nuclear safety, security, and safeguards as well as nuclear technologies and their applications. We welcomed the successful convening of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) Annual Meeting in Krabi, Thailand from 1-4 July 2019.
22. We reiterated our commitment to preserve the Southeast Asian region as Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter. We stressed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including under the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ (2018-2022). We reaffirmed our commitment to continuously engage the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty. Our ASEAN experts could explore ways to bridge the differences, including the possibility of engaging with NWS experts. We would continue to submit the biennial SEANWFZ Resolution through the First Committee to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

### **Maritime Cooperation**

23. We welcomed positive developments in maritime cooperation among ASEAN Member States, including through continued constructive dialogues on issues of common interest and concern under the ambit of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ADMM and ADMM-Plus, AMMTC, East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). We encouraged stronger coordination and greater synergy among ASEAN-cross-sectoral bodies and other relevant ASEAN mechanisms in enhancing maritime cooperation in the region. In this regard, we reaffirmed the role of the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) in fostering dialogue on maritime cooperation. We welcomed the successful conclusion of the 8<sup>th</sup> AMF and 6<sup>th</sup> EAMF in Manila in December 2018 and looked forward to the convening of the 9<sup>th</sup> AMF and 7<sup>th</sup> EAMF in Viet Nam in December 2019.

## **Human Rights**

24. We reaffirmed our commitment to promoting tolerance, moderation and respect for diversity as well as to promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. We congratulated the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of establishment as an overarching human rights institution in ASEAN that works towards the promotion and protection of human rights in order to contribute to the vision of a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community. We noted with appreciation the milestones that AICHR has achieved in the past decade in realising the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) adopted in 2012 and mainstreaming human rights across the three pillars of ASEAN and the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Enabling Masterplan) adopted in 2018, spearheaded by the AICHR in collaboration with other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities, was truly encouraging as a milestone towards promoting inclusiveness in ASEAN. In this connection, we noted AICHR's discussions to take stock of its work with a view to further enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN.
25. We noted with satisfaction the accomplishments of the AICHR as reflected in the AICHR Annual Report 2019, including the continued and dedicated efforts in expanding its programmes and activities to cover a wide range of issues in its scope of work, strengthening its institutional capacity and efficiency, and enhancing collaboration with the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as well as ASEAN's external partners in contributing towards ASEAN Community-building process. We commended the AICHR's various successful public outreach programmes, including those pertaining to the youths of ASEAN, notably through the AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights, which have been conducted annually in the past seven years. We encouraged the AICHR to continue its efforts to fully and effectively discharge its mandates and functions, particularly in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN. We also renewed our commitment to strengthen human rights cooperation in the region.
26. We welcomed the work and achievements of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) and commended the Governing Council for the adoption of the Institute's Three-Year Work Plan (2018-2020) in 2018 to support ASEAN in further implementing the APSC Blueprint 2025. We noted ongoing discussions on the sustainability of the ASEAN-IPR's operational budget after 2020. We also congratulated the ASEAN-IPR for the successful holding of a number of activities, namely the "ASEAN-IPR Regional Youth Conference on Peace and Tolerance" on 19-20 October 2018 in Jakarta and the "Mainstreaming Peace and Reconciliation in ASEAN: An ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation Training Series" on 21-22 February 2019 in Manila. We also welcomed the collaboration between ASEAN-IPR and the UN in convening a Workshop on "ASEAN Perspectives in Conflict Management & Conflict Resolution in the Region" held on 5-7 December 2018 in Jakarta, and encouraged more active initiatives of the Institute in the future. We



likewise welcomed the launching of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) during an ASEAN-IPR symposium on 13 December 2018 in Cebu, Philippines which underscored the importance of women's participation in the peace processes and reconciliation efforts of ASEAN Member States in line with the Joint Statement on Women, Peace and Security adopted at the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit.

27. We reaffirmed the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) as a center of excellence in encouraging efforts to address the issue of explosive remnants of war (ERW) for interested ASEAN Member States, as well as to enhance public awareness of the dangers of ERW among affected communities. We welcomed the convening of the Regional Seminar on Full and Effective Operationalisation of ARMAC: Enhancing Regional Efforts in Addressing ERW through Integrated Approach in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in April 2019. We noted the ongoing discussion on the financial sustainability of ARMAC after the year 2020.

### **ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY**

28. We noted that ASEAN's economic performance remains robust notwithstanding the challenging global environment, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growth estimated at 5.2% in 2018 and strong performance observed in both trade and investment in the first half of 2019. We expressed concern on the developments relating to the trade tensions between our major trading partners and reaffirm our strong commitment to upholding a transparent, open, inclusive, and rules-based multilateral trading system as embodied in the World Trade Organization (WTO). We acknowledged the need to reform the WTO system in a way that takes into consideration the changing global realities. To this end, we reaffirmed our resolve to continue advancing our regional economic integration agenda and foster regional resilience as envisioned in the AEC Blueprint 2025, and towards targets such as the doubling of intra-ASEAN trade by 2025.
29. We recognised that the global economy is at an important crossroad with an increasing number of uncertainties and challenges. In this regard, we reiterated our strong commitment to concluding the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations within 2019 to reinvigorate international trade and to uphold ASEAN centrality. We encouraged the RCEP Ministers and officials to redouble their efforts to reach this target, guided by the RCEP Work Plan 2019 which was endorsed by the Ministers at the intersessional meeting in Siem Reap in March 2019. We also called for relevant ASEAN FTA Partners to prioritise the RCEP negotiations and to work closely with ASEAN to conclude the RCEP negotiations within this year to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement.
30. We welcomed the progress made in the key AEC initiatives, including the recent signing of the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA) and the Fourth Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA) by the ASEAN

Economic Ministers (AEM), which marks an important milestone in ASEAN services and investment integration. We also welcomed further financial services liberalisation and cooperation in ASEAN with the signing of the Protocol to Implement the Eighth Package of Commitments on Financial Services under the ASEAN Framework Agreement of Services (AFAS), the conclusion of two new bilateral arrangements under the ASEAN Banking Integration Framework (ABIF) and the endorsement of the ASEAN Capital Markets Forum's (ACMF) initiative to create the Roadmap for ASEAN Sustainable Capital Markets. We were pleased with the ongoing work on innovative financing approaches through the Inclusive Finance Facility and the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility under the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and reaffirmed our commitment to accelerate infrastructure development and financing in ASEAN through mobilisation of private capital. We further commended the work on connectivity cross-border retail payments, including through the development of the ASEAN payments policy framework to guide cross-border real-time retail payments across ASEAN Member States as well as the progress on the Thailand and Singapore payment system linkage, and looked forward to its live operation by the first half of 2020.

31. We were pleased with the ongoing efforts of the Working Committee on Capital Account Liberalisation (WC-CAL) in promoting the use of local currencies to enhance trade and direct investment flows in the region. We note the three existing bilateral arrangements on local currency settlement, and encourage ASEAN Member States to consider similar arrangements with each other, where appropriate. We welcomed the signing of Letters of Intent between the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and Bank of Indonesia (BI), the BSP and Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), and the BSP and the Bank of Thailand (BOT) to initiate discussions on establishment of a local currency settlement framework. We looked forward to the completion of the Guiding Principles of Local Currency Settlement Framework, to guide ASEAN Member States in establishing bilateral local currency settlement arrangements, in the ASEAN region by the end of the year.
32. We noted the developments in the ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including efforts to improve the existing ones, such as those FTAs with China, the Republic of Korea, and Australia and New Zealand. We welcomed the signing of the First Protocol to Amend the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and the entry into force of the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement and the ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Investment Agreement on 11 June and 17 June 2019 respectively.
33. We welcomed the signing of Protocol 4 of the ASEAN Multilateral Agreement on the Full Liberalisation of Passenger Air Services (MAFLPAS) on "Co-Terminal Rights between Points within the Territory of Any Other ASEAN Member State", a key milestone to enhance air connectivity and deepen economic integration. We also welcomed the progress made towards implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT), particularly the full ratification of Protocol 7 (Customs Transit System) by all ASEAN Member States.

Further, we looked forward to the completion of ratification of AFAFGIT Protocol 2 (Designation of Frontier Posts) in order to realise the operation of ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) which would simplify customs and transport procedures for goods in transit movement among ASEAN Member States.

34. We welcomed the adoption of the Guidelines for Safety Standards for Non-Convention Ships, thereby further strengthening cooperation in improving safety standards and inspection of NCS.
35. We welcomed ongoing efforts to prepare ASEAN for the challenges and opportunities brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and digital connectivity, following the completion of the assessment of ASEAN's readiness for the 4IR last year. We were encouraged that all ten ASEAN Member States have signed the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce and are in the process of ratifying the agreement for its early entry into force. We also noted with appreciation the progress in the development of the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework Action Plan (DIFAP) and the follow up work to the recently endorsed ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance, which sets the ASEAN baseline principles and initiatives for digital data governance which include both personal and non-personal data, with an aim to promote data-driven innovation and facilitate cross-border data flows. We recognised that work remains for ASEAN to identify concrete next steps towards a holistic, coherent, and coordinated strategy on the 4IR and the digital economy. To this end, we welcomed the intensification of discussions and dialogues on the development of next steps for the region in the 4IR, including the holding of a Special Session on 4IR in ASEAN earlier this year as well as the recently convened special meeting of the Committee-of-the-Whole (CoW) of the AEC focusing on this issue. We also recognised the potential contribution of new technologies in realising sustainable development objectives.
36. We noted with appreciation the progress made in the development of an ASEAN Innovation Roadmap 2019-2025 that would integrate and synergise the efforts of relevant sectors. We appreciated the work done towards defining a shared ASEAN High Performance Computing (HPC) infrastructure where the establishment of the infrastructure would enhance ASEAN's readiness for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We looked forward to the strengthening of capacity to perform foresight analysis through the ASEAN Foresight Alliance.
37. We appreciated the progress towards realising ASEAN's energy intensity and renewable energy targets, with the 2020 energy intensity reduction target of 20% having been exceeded last year. To secure a sustainable energy future, we noted the various initiatives endorsed by the ASEAN Ministers on Energy to pursue key recommendations to enhance ASEAN cooperation in natural gas, synergise efforts to pursue multilateral power trade in the ASEAN Power Grid, and develop green building codes to support energy efficiency, as well as implement a capacity building roadmap on energy investment and financing in the region. We also welcomed the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ASEAN and the

International Renewable Energy Agency, including its accompanying action plan, to help scale-up renewable energy deployment in ASEAN and strengthen efforts towards the region's transition to clean energy.

38. We welcomed the successful outcomes of the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Illegal Wildlife Trade on 21-22 March 2019 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which fostered cooperation to advance the fight against illegal wildlife trade and ensured conservation and sustainable use of wild animals and plants through strict implementation of international trade regulations. We reiterated our commitments to further enhancing collaborative actions among ASEAN Member States in combating illegal wildlife trade through demand reduction and public awareness campaigns.
39. We noted the continued efforts to address the challenges of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. We welcomed the convening of the ASEAN Meeting on Combating IUU Fishing in Partnership with the European Union (EU) on 4-5 April 2019 in Bangkok, which fostered cooperation and exchange of experience, information and best practices between ASEAN and the EU in addressing IUU Fishing in a holistic and sustainable manner, and noted that the relevant officials are exploring the possibility of establishing an ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing as a forum for information sharing and capacity building among ASEAN Member States in ways that it would complement the existing mechanism in the region such as the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Southeast Asia Region (RPoA-IUU) and The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC).
40. We noted the progress made upon the implementation of ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-2025 for its conclusion for seven priority deliverables to be done in 2019 in order to achieve significant improvements in start-up eco system development, support the establishment of inclusive SME business policy, and facilitate the development of the digital economy and innovation as well as promoting entrepreneurship and human capital development
41. We welcomed the progress made towards the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) where Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia joined the Live Operation on 1 April 2019 and 1 July 2019 respectively. We noted efforts to provide support for the remaining ASEAN Member States (Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines) to be on board within the year. We noted the progress in the work of the ASEAN Customs Transit System (ACTS) pilot projects for Participating Member States (PMS) in North-South and East-West corridors, which is expected to "Go Live" by early 2020 with subsequent linking and operationalisation of ACTS. We also took note of the targeted implementation of the ASEAN-wide Self-Certification (AWSC) Scheme by March 2020. We welcomed the final Report of the Baseline Study on ASEAN Seamless Trade Facilitation Indicators (ASTFI) and its recommendation to further reduce trade transactions cost, We also welcomed efforts to enhance the ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services, and Trade (ASSIST) mechanism, to assist ASEAN businesses in resolving cross-border issues related to the implementation of ASEAN economic agreements.

42. We were pleased with the progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025 to enhance trade facilitation and ensure food security, food safety, better nutrition and equitable distribution. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Public-Private Partnership Regional Framework for Technology Development in the Food, Agriculture and Forestry (FAF) Sectors to increase collaborative investment in sustainable technology development, adoption and dissemination throughout the whole value chain in the FAF in ASEAN.
43. We were pleased to note that 135 million tourists visited ASEAN in 2018, an increase of 7.6 per cent from 2017. Intra-ASEAN travel continued to be the major share of tourists, making up 38.6 per cent of total international arrivals in 2017. We noted that enhanced connectivity within ASEAN as well as ASEAN and beyond has played a significant role in facilitating tourism in the region.

### **Palm Oil Industry**

44. We noted the deep concern of some ASEAN Member States on issues relating to unfair market access and treatment for palm oil. These will bring negative impact on palm oil producing countries and their strenuous efforts to attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), palm oil sustainability and environmental protection. We reaffirmed our support for the concerned Member States' efforts to address the sustainability of palm oil, including their continued engagement with relevant parties.

## **ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY**

### **Implementation of the ASCC Blueprint 2025**

45. We noted with satisfaction that the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community pillar has continued to undertake measures to build a people-centred, people-oriented ASEAN Community. The work of the ASCC sectoral bodies has contributed to improving the quality of life of the people, building a community that engages and benefits the people, and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic. As of 27 March 2019, a total of 954 activities have been undertaken towards addressing the 109 strategic measures of the ASCC Blueprint 2025. We also noted that an ASCC Blueprint 2025 Results-based Monitoring System has been put in place. The Result Framework contains 32 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to measure the progress in 18 key areas of the ASCC Blueprint.

### **Peoples and Institutions**

46. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the ASEAN Cultural Year 2019 to celebrate the cultural diversity and shared heritage of ASEAN under the theme "Diversity, Creativity, Sustainability". We commended the culture sector's leadership for the success of the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts 2019 in Bangkok

and the ASEAN Cultural Roadshow in several European cities. We looked forward to the implementation of many other cultural events of the ASEAN Cultural Year to promote ASEAN culture regionally and internationally and reinforce its role in promoting the creative industries, cultural tourism, as a catalyst for people-to-people connectivity and sustainable development.

47. We welcomed the adoption of the Concept Note and Terms of Reference for the Network of ASEAN Associations of ASEAN Member States by the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting, which aims at promoting greater public awareness of ASEAN and its sense of identity, as well as strengthening and broadening grass-roots support for the ASEAN Community within ASEAN Member States. We also looked forward to the first annual meeting of the Network in Thailand in 2019.
48. We took note of the recommendations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Localisation Symposium held in 2018 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, as well as of the ensuing study on SDG Localisation in ASEAN. We looked forward to the convening of the 4<sup>th</sup> Symposium in September 2019 in Ha Noi, under the theme “Innovation in Achieving the SDGs and Eradicating Poverty” as well as the conducting of the research on “Emerging models of inclusive innovation: an ASEAN perspective” to highlight the role of innovations as an enabling factor to realise the SDGs.
49. We commended the commitment to advancing gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, gender mainstreaming and to promote and protect rights of women and children in the region. We strongly urged for more engagement of boys and men as agents of change in promoting gender equality and instigating positive changes in gender norms and behaviours. We also encouraged the advancement of the women, peace and security agenda in ASEAN through concerted collaboration between the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) to showcase ASEAN’s efforts and commitment to enhance women’s transformative roles in peace processes. We noted Indonesia’s convening of a Regional Training on Women, Peace and Security, which seeks to advance women’s participation in peace processes and the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in Jakarta from 8 to 10 April 2019. We congratulated the successful conduct of the Regional Forum on Eliminating Child, Early and Forced Marriage held on 6 March 2019 in Jakarta, to strengthen cross-sectoral understanding and promote partnership between different stakeholders with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies.
50. We recognised the progress made and encouraged further implementation of the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholders plan of actions in disaster health management, ending all forms of malnutrition, and combating anti-microbial resistance, which were committed by our ASEAN Leaders since 2017. We acknowledged the collaborative efforts in strengthening regional health security through the programmes in the mitigation of biological threats, and in the capacity building of regional emergency medical teams through the support of Canada and Japan respectively. We looked

forward to the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI), which would facilitate inter-pillar and inter-sectoral partnerships in promoting healthy and active ageing.

51. We commended the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting for establishing the ASEAN Working Group on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY) to realise the commitments made by the ASEAN Leaders as prescribed in the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for OOSCY. To this end, we also commended the continued efforts to enhance the quality of and access to basic education for all including the persons with disabilities, disadvantaged, and other marginalised groups. We acknowledged the development of the Future ASEAN Agenda for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) by the Regional Working Group on Business and Industry Cooperation on TVET, which signifies the commitment of the private sector in enhancing the role of TVET in ensuring the quality of the region's workforce. Towards this end, we encouraged relevant sectoral bodies and stakeholders to join hands and find ways to ensure that the development of TVET in our region is synergised and coherent. Furthermore, we highlighted that education cooperation in the region can be further strengthened by facilitating student exchange programmes between institutions in ASEAN Member States.
52. We emphasised that ASEAN Community-building efforts will benefit from enhanced participation and engagement of the youth in the policy discourse of all sectors, and thus welcomed the interface between ASEAN Leaders and representatives of youths on 22 June in Bangkok. We welcomed the successful convening of the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth and Related Meetings on 19 July 2019 in Vientiane under the theme of "Enhancing the Role of Youth in ASEAN for Sustainable Development and Regional Integration". We attached importance to enabling the youth to be future ready through collaborative efforts in digital, technical and soft skills development, including by fostering their participation in social entrepreneurship and volunteerism. In this connection, we acknowledged the value of youth volunteering and exchange programmes in realising ASEAN's aspiration to strengthen people-to-people connectivity and raising ASEAN awareness. We also looked forward to the outcomes of the Youth Development Index Phase II assessment, which will provide an understanding on how the youth of our region perceive and associate themselves with ASEAN values and identity. We commended the commitments that have been outlined in the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2016-2020 and the efforts undertaken in achieving it. We commended the enduring commitment of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY) in empowering young people and communities in climate action by declaring 25 November of every year as the ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day.
53. We supported the efforts of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS) in leveraging sports in ASEAN Community-building as well as in achieving the SDGs by aligning the priority areas of the ASEAN Work Plan on Sports with the policy areas of the Kazan Action Plan. We looked forward to the national football associations of ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN Football Federation working together to

explore the feasibility of a joint bid for the FIFA World Cup in 2034. We noted the effort in developing the ASEAN Physical Fitness Indicators (APFI). We looked forward to its first report to better guide and ensure that the ASEAN Community remains resilient and physically healthy.

54. We commended the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) for the adoption of the ASEAN Communication Master Plan 2018-2025 (ACMP II), with the overarching theme of “ASEAN: A Community of Opportunities for All”. We recognised the importance of inter-sectoral and inter-pillar collaboration to realise ACMP II whereby ASEAN sustains multi-stakeholder and inclusive communication programmes to effectively bring ASEAN’s key messages to our target audiences. We also looked forward to national and sectoral initiatives in line with ACMP II to enhance our peoples’ understanding and appreciation of the benefits of regional integration, and further strengthen ASEAN awareness and identity. We also acknowledged that following the AMRI’s adoption of the “Framework and Joint Declaration to Minimise the Harmful Effects of Fake News”, several initiatives were put in place to promote media literacy and cyber-wellness regionally and nationally.
55. We commended ASEAN Labour Ministers for signing the Statement on the Future of Work: Embracing Technology for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth on 29 April 2019 in Singapore. The Statement is a timely joint commitment to embrace opportunities brought by new technology and digital revolution by using technical and vocational education and training to skill, upskill and reskill our workers and ensuring the well-being of all workers, especially women, persons with disabilities, elderly and youth, and their access to the global labour markets. We also welcomed the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Joint Statement on Green Initiative to the 108<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference in June 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Statement reaffirms ASEAN’s collective commitment to promoting the creation of green jobs and the greening of existing jobs, enterprises and economies to achieve sustainable development and provide decent work for all in the region.
56. We recognised the pivotal role of our civil service in providing coordinated, efficient, effective and responsive public services to the peoples of ASEAN. We commended the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM) for its role in the promotion of good governance principles in public management towards efficient, citizen-centric, and accountable civil services in ASEAN. We looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Statement on Promotion of Good Governance and Acceleration of an Agile Civil Service in a Digital Economy at the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Heads of Civil Service Retreat in August 2019 in Thailand.

### **Climate Change, Environment, and Biodiversity**

57. We shared a concern over the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine debris and acknowledged the urgent need to enhance cooperation in addressing this issue. We welcomed the timely convening of the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Marine Debris on 5 March 2019 in Bangkok, where ASEAN Member States proposed robust



solutions to combat marine debris in the region. We welcomed the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris and the notation of the Framework of Action by our Leaders to strengthen collaborative action among ASEAN Member States and partners to prevent and significantly reduce marine debris, produced from both sea-based and land-based activities.

58. We shared a concern for the multi-faceted impact and risks of climate change and climate-related disasters on the people of ASEAN. We welcomed the positive outcomes of the UNFCCC Katowice Climate Change Conference in 2018, and reiterated ASEAN's commitment to advancing climate action towards the achievement of our respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in implementing the Paris Agreement. We look forward to furthering progress at the upcoming UNFCCC Santiago Climate Change Conference as well as the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.
59. We also welcomed the positive outcomes of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 14) in 2018, acknowledging that biodiversity, and the ecosystem functions and the services it provides, support all forms of life on Earth and underpin human health and well-being, economic growth and sustainable development. We reiterated ASEAN's commitment to promoting biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and mainstreaming towards the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets. We looked forward to furthering progress, with support and coordination with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in the regional and global dialogue on Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. We recognised the importance of strengthening our cooperation in promoting sustainable development through, among others, development of circular economy, the use of renewable energy, sustainable and integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate, sustainable management of natural resources and reduction of waste, and conservation of biodiversity.
60. We commended the good progress of the implementation of the Measurable Action for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA) under the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS 2006-2020) through the ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems (APSMPE 2014-2020).
61. We noted that transboundary haze pollution, arising from land and forest fires remains a major concern in the region. We reiterated our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) and the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation Towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (the Roadmap) to achieve a Haze-Free ASEAN by 2020. We looked forward to the Mid-Term Review on the implementation of the Roadmap to take stock of the implementation progress and to sustain momentum in ensuring concrete improvements towards achieving the vision of the Roadmap. We looked forward to the establishment and full operationalisation of the

ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution under the AATHP, which will facilitate faster and effective implementation of all aspects of the AATHP to address transboundary haze pollution in the ASEAN region.

62. We recognised that the Southeast Asian region is prone to natural disasters and reiterated our support for the operationalisation of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region. We also commended the work of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in enhancing ASEAN's capabilities and coordination in disaster management and emergency response. In this regard, we welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Satellite Warehouses in Chai Nat, Thailand, and in Manila, the Philippines, under the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA), which will enhance the mobilisation and delivery of relief items rapidly to disaster-affected areas. We also looked forward towards the operationalisation of ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (AMRG on HADR) which will help reinforce ASEAN's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities to respond to disasters effectively under a single ASEAN banner. We also agreed on the need to strengthen regional collaboration on public health at the national and regional levels in support of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) through the operationalisation of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management. We also welcomed the endorsement of the Phase 2 Plan of Action of the ASEAN Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance (ADRFI), that would support the provision of disaster risk financing and insurance solutions in the region, to close ASEAN's protection gap and reinforce ASEAN's disaster resilience.
63. We discussed and received a briefing from Myanmar on the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State. We reaffirmed our support for a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar in providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process and promoting sustainable development. We appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General of ASEAN (ASG), the AHA Centre, and officials from the Government of Myanmar in conducting the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) Mission to identify possible areas of cooperation in Rakhine State to facilitate the repatriation process, which was based on the mandate given by ASEAN. We agreed for the ASG to go further with the recommendations contained in the PNA, including those that focus on capacity building, dissemination of information and support to the provision of basic services in Rakhine State, and recognised the need for adequate resources for these activities. We welcomed the visit of the High-Level Mission led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, together with representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat and the AHA Centre, including an ASEAN-ERAT member, to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, from 27 to 29 July 2019 to share the information on arrangements made by the Government of Myanmar for prospective returnees. We looked forward to the conduct of Comprehensive Needs Assessment at appropriate intervals. We underscored the importance of prioritisation of basic services that would receive support and the usefulness of exploring

cooperation with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners on possible support. We welcomed the compilation of information by the ASEAN Secretariat regarding the cooperation and assistance voluntarily extended by ASEAN Member States to Myanmar to address the humanitarian situation, which will facilitate enhanced ASEAN coordination on this matter.

64. We stressed the importance of and reiterated our continued support for Myanmar's commitment to ensure safety and security for all communities in Rakhine State as effectively as possible and facilitate the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure and dignified manner. We welcomed the extension of the MoU between Myanmar Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and looked forward to its full implementation. We also looked forward to the continued and effective dialogue between Myanmar and Bangladesh to facilitate the repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State. We stressed the need to find a comprehensive and durable solution to address the root causes of the conflict and to create a conducive environment so that the affected communities can rebuild their lives. We encouraged Myanmar to continue to implement the remaining recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. We expect that the Independent Commission of Enquiry established by the Government of Myanmar would seek accountability by carrying out an independent and impartial investigation into alleged human rights violations and related issues. We also reaffirmed ASEAN's continued support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, to promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities as well as to ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.

## **ASEAN EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

65. We underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN centrality and unity in our engagement with external partners. We reviewed our cooperation with external partners and noted with satisfaction the strengthening of relations with our Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue Partners and Development Partners through existing frameworks, Plans of Action (PoAs) and development cooperation programmes based on mutual interest and benefit. We acknowledged with appreciation the contribution of these partnerships to our ASEAN Community-building efforts. Noting that Plans of Action between ASEAN and several Dialogue Partners will come to an end next year, we highlighted the importance of ensuring that the new Plans of Action continue to support the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together. We also welcomed support of our partners to the priorities of ASEAN this year in advancing our partnership for sustainability.
66. We took note of the growing interest from countries and regional organisations outside of the region to engage and develop stronger cooperation with ASEAN including through the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN with the

92 Non-ASEAN Ambassadors Accredited to ASEAN (NAAAs). We noted that ASEAN's partnerships with external partners as well as international and regional organisations are vital to address global issues and to promote sustainable development for the benefit of our people. We also welcomed the role of the ASEAN Committees in Third Countries and International Organisations in promoting ASEAN's interest and forging partnerships in the respective host countries and international organisations. We also welcomed the presence of two ASEAN Member States, Indonesia and Viet Nam, as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and looked forward to the further strengthening of the ASEAN-UN comprehensive partnership and cooperation.

### **Dialogue Partners**

67. We welcomed the successful convening of the 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-China Summit, 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit, 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Summit, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Russia Summit, the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit, as well as the ASEAN-Australia Informal Breakfast Summit and the ASEAN-India Informal Breakfast Summit in November 2018 in Singapore. We also welcomed the elevation of the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations to a strategic level and the adoption of the Joint Statement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Russian Federation Summit on Strategic Partnership. We welcomed the convening of the ASEAN-EU Leaders' Meeting in October 2018 in Brussels as well as the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in January 2019 in Brussels. We welcomed the commemoration of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Strategic Partnership with China and the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in 2018. We looked forward to the convening of the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations in November 2019 in Busan. We looked forward to the adoption of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2020-2024) at the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations. We also looked forward to the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Relations.

### **ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partners and ASEAN Development Partners**

68. We welcomed Chile becoming a Development Partner of ASEAN. We also noted the good progress made in the ASEAN-Germany Development Partnership, ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership and ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, and appreciated the three partner countries for their respective ongoing support for ASEAN Community-building efforts. We welcomed the adoption of the Practical Cooperation Areas for the ASEAN-Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership (2019-2023) to further enhance the cooperation.

### **Regional and International Organisations**

69. We underscored the importance of multilateral cooperation through regional and international organisations in addressing the growing transnational challenges that affect the lives of our people. In this regard, we were pleased to note that relations

with the United Nations (UN) and various regional organisations, including the Pacific Alliance (PA) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), continue to be strengthened through meetings and activities across all three ASEAN Community pillars. We highlighted the importance of addressing transnational challenges including climate change and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and looked forward to the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-UN Summit in November this year.

### **Regional Architecture**

70. We reaffirmed the important role of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) cooperation framework, in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in East Asian region. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening and deepening the APT process which plays a key role in regional community-building efforts with ASEAN as the driving force. We underscored the importance of “connecting the connectivities” within the APT. We agreed to further strengthen APT cooperation by implementing the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022. We also looked forward to the continued implementation of the East Asia Vision Group II recommendations aimed at promoting cooperation in East Asia. We looked forward to the launching of an APT website in 2019 to promote greater awareness of the APT. We reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the APT financial mechanisms to maintain the positive trajectory of the region’s economy despite the volatile global economic environment. We noted the important work of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) in closely monitoring the economic and financial developments in the region, strengthening its surveillance and operational capabilities, and providing support to the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM).
71. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening the EAS as a Leaders-led forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity in the region, in line with the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the 10th Anniversary of the EAS and based on the established objectives, principles and modalities of the EAS. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening the EAS by implementing the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative (2018-2022). We welcomed the continued discussions and efforts to strengthen the EAS, including through, among others, the regular engagement of the EAS Ambassadors’ Meeting in Jakarta to discuss implementation of the Leaders’ decisions and initiatives, as well as exchange information on regional development cooperation initiatives and security policies and initiatives. We looked forward to strengthening the EAS Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat to facilitate EAS coordination and cooperation effectively.
72. We reaffirmed the important role of the ARF as an inclusive platform for cooperation and constructive dialogue among the ARF Participants on political and security issues of common concern in the Asia-Pacific region and in promoting sustainable security. We noted that in the context of the evolving regional security architecture in the Asia-Pacific, it is imperative that the ARF maintains its relevance with ASEAN at its core.

We noted the continuation of practical activities under the ARF areas of cooperation towards the full implementation of the 2010 ARF Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement. We welcomed the efforts to strengthen the ARF, including through updating the ARF Vision Statement beyond 2020. We also emphasised the importance of strengthening partnerships between Track 1 and Track 2 organisations such as the ASEAN-Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), and encouraged ASEAN-ISIS and CSCAP to study issues/topics of importance and priority to the ARF.

### **ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific**

73. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific by our Leaders at the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, which serves as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The ASEAN-led mechanisms can serve as useful platforms for dialogues and cooperation to implement the Outlook. We welcomed external partners to work with ASEAN in promoting the principles laid out in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and to undertake cooperation with ASEAN, in accordance with the principles contained in the Outlook, on the four key identified areas to help contribute to peace, prosperity and development in the region.

### **Timor-Leste's Application for ASEAN Membership**

74. We looked forward to the Fact-Finding Missions of the three ASEAN Community pillars to Timor-Leste, beginning with the Fact-Finding Mission of the APSC in September this year. The planned visits demonstrate progress being made in the consideration of Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership. We also reaffirmed our commitment to provide capacity building assistance to Timor-Leste and encouraged Timor-Leste's participation in accordance with the elements and procedures outlined by ASEAN Member States.

## **REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**

### **South China Sea**

75. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and recognised the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability and prosperity. 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 warmly welcomed the continued improving cooperation between ASEAN and China, and were encouraged by the progress of the substantive negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) within a mutually-agreed timeline. We welcomed efforts to complete the first reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text by this year. We emphasised the need to maintain and promote an environment

conducive to the COC negotiations, and thus welcomed practical measures that could reduce tensions and the risk of accidents, misunderstandings and miscalculation. We stressed the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures to enhance, among others, trust and confidence amongst parties; and we reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

76. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations, activities and serious incidents in the area, 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 and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation, and pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the DOC that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

### **Developments in Korean Peninsula**

77. We stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. We urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the US and DPRK leaders. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We also underscored the importance of ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.

### **53<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

78. We looked forward to the convening of the 53<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Post Ministerial Conferences, 21<sup>st</sup> APT Foreign Ministers' Meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and 27<sup>th</sup> ARF to be held in Viet Nam in 2020.

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