



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 38TH AND 39TH ASEAN SUMMITS

26 October 2021 via videoconference

1. We, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), gathered for the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits on 26 October 2021 under the Chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam. The Summits were chaired by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and convened in accordance with the ASEAN Charter.

2. We reiterated our support for Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship under the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", which focuses on harnessing the caring nature of ASEAN to build a harmonious and resilient Community with the people at its centre; ensuring that ASEAN remains relevant through preparing and adapting for the future where its peoples can seize new opportunities, as well as overcoming existing and future challenges; and creating opportunities for people to benefit through initiatives that enhance the sustainable prosperity of the region. We highlighted the importance of maintaining the momentum in cooperating within and beyond ASEAN for the pursuit of these goals.

ASEAN COMMUNITY BUILDING

3. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen the ASEAN Community as well as ASEAN's Centrality and unity to address common challenges as well as to advance ASEAN's comprehensive recovery from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We recognised that the strength and resilience of the ASEAN Community lies in its people and in this regard, emphasised the importance of promoting an ASEAN Identity and awareness, and fulfilling their desire to live in a region of lasting peace, security and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity, and social progress. In this regard, we reaffirmed ASEAN Member States' common values and principles, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter. We also noted the need for ASEAN to strengthen its capacity and institutional effectiveness to adapt to the new, emerging, and rapidly evolving challenges.

4. We reaffirmed our commitment towards the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 as well as commencing the exercise to develop the Post-2025 Community Vision. In this regard, we adopted the *Terms of Reference for the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision and the Roadmap*. We noted the proposal for the HLTF to discuss ways to strengthen ASEAN's capacity and institutional effectiveness to support ASEAN's post-2025 vision and to submit recommendations at the 41st ASEAN Summit. We also note the efforts made to review the implementation of the ASEAN Charter, by drawing the necessary lessons learned that are useful to enhancing the efficiency of ASEAN's organisational structure and operations.

5. We acknowledged that the HLTF would comprise Eminent Persons and High-Level Representatives to be nominated by ASEAN Member States by 15 December 2021 and noted that in order to ensure continuity throughout the period of developing the Vision, a permanent shepherd shall co-chair the HLTF together with the current year's ASEAN Chair. We welcomed Malaysia as the permanent shepherd of the HLTF.

6. Amidst the unprecedented challenges and socio-economic impact brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we commended the ongoing work of all ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Organs for progress achieved in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprints 2025, as well as the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. We welcomed the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the three (3) ASEAN Community Blueprints and MPAC 2025, and the implementation of their recommendations to ensure their full completion.

7. 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).

Key Deliverables

8. We are pleased to adopt the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), which is a strategic, holistic, cross-sectoral and coordinated approach across the three ASEAN Community Pillars, to ensure ASEAN's collective, rapid, effective and timely response in mitigating the impacts of different types of emergencies and disasters that have or may affect the Southeast Asian region, with a view to better protect the society, economy and the broader developmental agenda. We noted the conduct of the mapping exercise between the ASEAN SHIELD and existing ASEAN initiatives on emergency and disaster response and noted the endorsement of the Recommendations on Strengthening ASEAN Cross-Pillar and Cross-Sectoral Coordination to Enhance Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response through the ASEAN SHIELD by the 29th ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) Meeting on 2 August 2021. Moving forward, we looked forward to the implementation of these Recommendations by the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. We also welcomed the ongoing work to review the Financial Rules of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund to enable the peoples of ASEAN to make contributions during natural disasters, consistent with the ASEAN Chairmanship priorities of harnessing the caring nature of ASEAN.

9. We reaffirmed our belief that regionalism and multilateralism are important principles and frameworks of cooperation, and that their strengths and values lie in their open, inclusive, transparent and rules-based nature and emphasis on mutual benefit and respect. We also recognised that the increasingly complex and cross-cutting challenges are compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic that has adversely affected the well-being and livelihoods of the people. To this end, we adopted the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration*

on *Upholding Multilateralism* which reaffirms ASEAN's commitment to upholding and promoting multilateral cooperation and partnership, founded on the principles stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of international law, to address emerging opportunities and challenges and actively shape a rules-based regional architecture that is capable of tackling pressing common regional and global issues towards achieving peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

10. We acknowledged the emerging significance of the Blue Economy as well as the growing interest from external partners to engage ASEAN Member States on the concept, both bilaterally and regionally. To this end, we are pleased to adopt the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy*, which determines the principles by which ASEAN conducts its work on the Blue Economy, and outlines the potential areas under the Blue Economy that ASEAN will explore for action and cooperation in accordance with international law, both internally and with external partners.

11. We congratulated Brunei Darussalam in convening the *First Innovation Platform Dialogue* under the theme of 'Youth Employment and Digitalisation in ASCC Perspectives'. The Dialogue contributes to ASEAN's preparedness to respond to future challenges. This Innovation Platform Dialogue is complementary to the *Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap: An ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda to Accelerate ASEAN's Economic Recovery and Digital Economy Integration* which aims to turn the ongoing pandemic crisis into an opportunity for Southeast Asia through digital transformation and greater integration of its digital economy. We encourage more Innovation Platform Dialogues to be conducted in the coming years.

12. We recognised the increasing pace of digital transformation in our region, especially amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the accelerated adoption of digital technologies in our economies and societies. We are pleased to adopt the Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) for ASEAN, which aims to develop ASEAN's regional capacity in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and the advancement of regional supply chains and would also contribute to the utilisation of 4IR technologies to boost the region's competitiveness, and well-being, through inclusive digital transformation.

13. We are pleased to adopt the *Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Importance of Family for Community Development and Nation-building* which underscores the foundation of our efforts to strengthen societies and peoples of ASEAN so as to address the social challenges and complexities in a post-pandemic world. We called on appropriate support to be given to all families throughout their life-journeys to take into account their circumstances and needs and in accordance with our national laws.

14. We reiterated the need to elevate the roles of children and youth in realising sustainable development in the region, ensuring that they are prepared and future-ready to respond to complex global challenges through initiatives such as, the *ASEAN Youth Academy Programme*, *ASEAN Youth on Climate Change* and *ASEAN Walk 2022*, and through child-and-youth centric initiatives, including the *Regional*

Plan of Action on Implementing the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration, Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN and the Report on the 5th Domain of ASEAN Youth Development Index: Understanding how young people see ASEAN Awareness, Values and Identity. We are pleased to adopt the *Declaration on the Elimination of Bullying of Children in ASEAN* to strengthen concerted efforts and undertake appropriate measures to promote and protect children in ASEAN against all forms of bullying in different settings, ensuring that their best interests and welfare are upheld.

15. We adopted the *Strategic Policy Framework on Promoting an Adaptive ASEAN Community of Greater Understanding, Tolerance and a Sense of Regional Agendas Among the Peoples of ASEAN*, which recognised the need for more coherence and to enhance cross-sectoral policies and activities. We appreciated the Government of Japan for its support on this initiative. We also looked forward to the completion of the ASEAN Sculptures in the ASEAN Square in Brunei Darussalam, and welcomed the publication of “ASEAN Diversity”, symbolising how diversity can promote intercultural understanding, unity, peace and harmony in ASEAN.

16. We reaffirmed our commitment to contributing to the goals of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, and adopted the *ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC*. We supported in principle the establishment of an ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) in Brunei Darussalam, that will function as an inter-governmental centre for climate change coordination and cooperation among ASEAN Member States to realise a climate-resilient and low carbon ASEAN region. We further commended the publication of the ASEAN State of Climate Change Report, which provides an overall outlook on the state of play of climate change in the context of ASEAN region and insights on prioritised regional climate actions. We also welcomed the *Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on ASEAN Youth for Climate Action* developed and adopted by the ASEAN Youth on Climate Action (ASEANyouCAN) youth delegates, which was presented to the ASEANyouCAN-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment Dialogue, highlighting the collective position of ASEAN youth, in particular their concerns and recommendations to strengthen regional climate action.

17. We recognised the need to ensure sustainability and progress in ASEAN’s work through equipping junior officers of ASEAN Member States with the knowledge and skills to face new challenges. To this end, we welcomed the establishment of the *ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme with the ASEAN Secretariat* to enhance familiarisation with the work of ASEAN, develop skilled officers, enable networking and strengthen the sense of ASEAN Identity, and welcomed the funding to the Programme by Brunei Darussalam for the next ten (10) years.

18. In addition, we remain determined to continue promoting ASEAN identity and awareness among its peoples and enhancing ASEAN's visibility through, including but not limited to, promoting the display of the ASEAN Flag in ASEAN Member States and in this regard we welcomed Viet Nam's announcement on displaying the ASEAN flag alongside her National Flag in Government office buildings.

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

19. We remained deeply concerned with the continued human cost and suffering as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods brought about by COVID-19, which has severely affected the region. We acknowledged the ongoing whole-of-government efforts of ASEAN Member States as well as a whole-of-Community approach by ASEAN in advancing its collective efforts to respond to COVID-19 and recover swiftly and sustainably. We commended the work of ASEAN Member States in spearheading various initiatives with a view to contributing to the regional efforts in addressing COVID-19 and future public health emergencies, as well as promoting regional comprehensive and sustainable recovery and noted the important coordinating role of the ACC and the active work of the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE), which demonstrates ASEAN's solidarity and ability to address unprecedented challenges of the pandemic in a coordinated multi-sectoral, cross-pillar and multi-stakeholder manner.

20. We welcomed the progress on the implementation of the *ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan*, which serves as the region's consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic. We reiterated our commitment to working together to mitigate the impact of the pandemic through the five (5) ACRF broad strategies: (i) enhancing health systems; (ii) strengthening human security; (iii) maximising the potential of intra-ASEAN market and broader economic integration; (iv) accelerating inclusive digital transformation; and (v) advancing towards a more sustainable and resilient future. Noting the importance of cross-sectoral coordination and cross-pillar collaboration towards achieving post COVID-19 recovery and resilience in ASEAN, we welcomed and encouraged the support and contribution from all stakeholders for the effective implementation of the ACRF.

21. We welcomed the continued contributions from ASEAN Member States and external partners to the *COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund* which now has pledged contributions amounting to approximately USD 25.8 million. We also welcomed the utilisation of USD 10.5 million of the Fund to procure COVID-19 vaccines for the peoples of ASEAN and ASEAN Secretariat staff through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as "no one is safe until everyone is safe". In this regard, we looked forward to the early distribution of the vaccines to the people of ASEAN and ASEAN Secretariat staff in the first and second quarter of 2022. We also look forward to exploring the regional vaccine supply chain and self-reliance of affordable, quality vaccines for normal and emergency situations both at the national and ASEAN-wide levels for the benefits of our people, consistent with the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance (AVSSR).

22. We recognised that sustainable development and sustainability is essential in mitigating the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and building a better and more resilient future. Therefore, we encouraged the acceleration of efforts to deliver the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in view of the Decade of Action for the SDGs and the reversal in the progress of achievement of the SDGs particularly on poverty (Goal 1) and inequality (Goal 10) caused by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcomed a new economic model that is restorative and regenerative by design, and in this regard, welcomed the endorsement of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Network, which is expected to contribute to greater competitive, efficient and resilient ASEAN.

23. We are pleased to adopt the *ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy* which serves to guide ASEAN's development of the care economy in response to complex crises and growing challenges in order to protect different segments of populations and sectors and to also become an indispensable part of our inclusive socio-economic growth towards sustainable development in the region. We looked forward to the implementation of the initiatives along the six (6) broad strategies that are expected to support and develop the ASEAN care economy platform, as well as to complement the ACRF and the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision.

24. We strongly encouraged ASEAN Member States, ASEAN's external partners, international organisations and other sources including public and private sectors to earmark contributions to the *ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (RRMS)*, taking into account factors such as compliance with existing international standards for essential medical supplies and pharmaceutical products. We appreciated the contributions of some ASEAN Member States to the RRMS, including contributions from Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

25. We looked forward to the timely establishment and early operationalisation of the ACPHEED, which would serve as a centre of excellence and regional resource hub to strengthen ASEAN's regional capabilities to prepare for, prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies and emerging diseases. We appreciated and welcomed the support from Japan and Australia towards the ACPHEED, while encouraging other external partners to support its operationalisation. We urged the countries concerned to exercise utmost flexibility in the spirit of compromise to reach a decision on the selection of the host country for the ACPHEED to ensure the expeditious operationalisation of the Centre. We also appreciated the progress on the development of the ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination Systems (APHECS), and the launch of the ASEAN Portal for Public Health Emergencies. We also recognised the importance of strengthening regional cooperation especially towards addressing the impacts of the pandemic on mental health.

26. We encouraged the maintenance of necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating, to the extent possible, the essential movement of people, especially essential business and official travels between and among ASEAN Member States, while safeguarding public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic. In this regard, we welcomed the adoption of the *ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF)* by the ACC and looked forward to its early operationalisation.

27. We highlighted the importance of strengthening regional and international cooperation to safely restart and rebuild ASEAN tourism industry as a significant contributor to economic and social advancements and a major source of employment, income and livelihoods of people and local communities in the region, noting that tourism is one of the hardest-hit sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, we welcomed the *Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism*, which provides coordinated measures to be under taken by ASEAN Member States in a phased approach to safely reopen the industry while working towards a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive ASEAN tourism. We encouraged ASEAN Member States, relevant Sectoral Bodies of ASEAN and other stakeholders including the private sector to continue the collaboration efforts and explore innovative measures to contribute its implementation.

28. We reaffirmed our commitment to keep markets open and ensure the continued flow of trade and investment, supply chain connectivity, particularly for essential products, and for a strong and resilient post-COVID-19 economy. To this end, we welcomed the expansion of the list of essential goods under the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Implementation of Non-Tariff Measures on Essential Goods under the Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic* to incorporate 107 tariff lines of agricultural and food products into the list. We are also exploring the possibility of extending the life span of the MOU as well as expanding the list of essential goods given the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will further ensure the free flow of essential goods in the region and provide support to the private sector in this difficult time as the region continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initiative for ASEAN Integration

29. We underscored the importance of narrowing the development gap within and among ASEAN Member States and enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a region. In this regard, we commended the progress made from the first year of the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025), which guides our collective efforts to narrow the development gap within ASEAN and between ASEAN and the rest of the world, and to enhance ASEAN's competitiveness as a region, taking into consideration emerging challenges and priorities, brought about by global and regional developments and trends, such as the 4IR, gender and social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We emphasised the importance of continued engagement with ASEAN Partners and other external parties to ensure the successful implementation of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025).

Sub-regional cooperation

30. We emphasised the importance of ASEAN Centrality and unity in promoting ASEAN's sub-regional development. We recognised the relevance of sub-regional development to ASEAN's regional integration and Community-building process, especially in narrowing the development gap and enhancing ASEAN's regional

competitiveness, enhancing regional connectivity, and ensuring ASEAN's sustainable development and inclusive development. 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 and in this regard, we welcomed the commitment to further promote equitable and sustainable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning it with sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN. In this regard, we also welcomed the upcoming ASEAN Forum on Sub-Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth in November 2021.

ASEAN Connectivity

31. We welcomed the significant progress in the implementation of the MPAC 2025 which helps in achieving sustainable development and supporting post-pandemic recovery efforts as we strive towards a seamlessly and comprehensively connected and integrated ASEAN that will promote competitiveness, inclusiveness, and a greater sense of Community. We commended the efforts of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC), Lead Implementing Bodies (LIBs), relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, MPAC 2025 National Coordinators, and National Focal Points in moving forward the MPAC 2025 initiatives. In this regard, we called on relevant ASEAN stakeholders and external partners to implement the recommendations of the MTR and the Third Progress Review Report of MPAC 2025 to enhance coordination and strengthen delivery at the regional and national levels.

32. Recognising the need to identify infrastructure opportunities to expedite socio-economic recovery and strengthen resilience in ASEAN, we looked forward to the completion of the Assessment of Future Sustainable Infrastructure Trends and Priorities in a Post-Pandemic ASEAN. We are encouraged by the progress in implementing the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS), including the convening of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum on 6-8 October 2021 via videoconference and the development of City Technical Proposals for eight (8) cities to engage potential partners for collaboration. With the world facing more frequent disruptions, we underscored the importance of ensuring that our supply chains remain flexible, agile and resilient to facilitate seamless trade and logistics, and looked forward to the completion of the ASEAN Database on Trade Routes and the Framework for Enhancing Supply Chain Efficiency and Resilience as part of initiatives under MPAC 2025.

33. We acknowledged the importance of partnerships in mobilising resources to implement the MPAC 2025 and promote greater synergies amongst various connectivity strategies, including through the Connecting the Connectivities approach, and to prepare the ASEAN Connectivity agenda beyond 2025. In this regard, we are pleased to note the successful convening of the 12th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium on Promoting Recovery and Resilience through Connectivity on 26 August 2021 and other ASEAN Connectivity activities with the active participation and steadfast support from Dialogue Partners and other external partners.

ASEAN Smart Cities Network

34. We emphasised the importance of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) as a collaborative platform for catalysing cooperation in smart and sustainable urban development in the region through technological and innovative solutions to deliver better quality of life. We commended ASCN's continued efforts to foster partnerships to deliver Smart City Action Plans (SCAPs), and welcomed the endorsement of the Concept Notes on ASCN Online Portal and ASEAN Smart City Investment Toolkit at the Fourth ASCN Annual Meeting on 30 August 2021. In this regard, we called on Dialogue Partners and other external partners to continue their active engagement with and support to the ASCN.

ASEAN Prize

35. We recognised the role of the ASEAN Prize in promoting public awareness among our people on the core values and principles of ASEAN based on the ASEAN Charter. We congratulated the Mekong Institute, a research institute and community development centre based in Khon Kaen, Thailand, for being selected as the recipient of the ASEAN Prize 2021, in recognition of its work in promoting a more prosperous and harmonious sub-regional development and contributing to a wider regional cooperation and integration, particularly in agricultural development and commercialisation.

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY

36. We were pleased to note that the implementation rate of the APSC Blueprint 2025 has increased to 98%, with a total of 283 out of the 290 action lines having been addressed as of August 2021. Relative to the remaining action lines to be acted upon, we welcomed the suggestions made by the 23rd ASPC Council Meeting, including the examination of factors and challenges in implementing certain action lines and ensuring alignment between the APSC Blueprint action lines and sectoral work plans. Likewise, we noted the report on *Making the APSC Blueprint Adaptive and Responsive*, which includes emerging issues such as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP); ASEAN's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic; developments in cybersecurity; and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in the monitoring the progress of ASEAN Community-building.

37. We reaffirmed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct in governing inter-state relations in the region and as a foundation for maintaining regional peace and stability. We reiterated our commitment to further promote the principles embodied in the TAC within the region and beyond and emphasised the importance for all High Contracting Parties' to fulfill their obligations under the Treaty. We welcomed the increasing number of interested parties to accede to the TAC, on the basis of respect for and in conformity with the purposes and principles of the TAC. In this regard, we looked forward to the accession of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, and the Sultanate of Oman.

38. We reiterated the importance of cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination to combat illicit drug activities in the region and reaffirmed our commitment towards a drug-free ASEAN and a zero-tolerance approach towards illicit drugs. We stressed the importance of implementing the *ASEAN Work Plan in Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 (ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2025)* and the *ASEAN Cooperation Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle 2020-2022* and noted with satisfaction the outcomes of their mid-term reviews. We commended the annual publication of the *ASEAN Drugs Monitoring Report*, a flagship initiative of ASEAN cooperation against illicit drugs, which continued amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and welcomed the launch of the *ASEAN Drugs Monitoring Report 2020*.

39. We reiterated our commitment to preserve the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter. We stressed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including through implementing the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on 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. We underscored our commitment to strengthening our common resolve in making substantive progress, including through the submission of a biennial SEANWFZ Resolution through the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

40. We commended the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) for the progressive implementation of its mandate and functions through mainstreaming human rights in cross-sectoral areas, its promotion of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), as well as its contribution to the Implementation Plan of the ACRF and the ASEAN SHIELD. We noted with appreciation the implementation of AICHR activities over the past year in advocating for human rights due diligence in the private sector, rights-based humanitarian action, environmental rights and climate change adaptation, and the right to health. We noted the successful convening of the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2021, which provided a regional platform for dialogue on human rights and sharing best practices and experiences in the promotion and protection of human rights among ASEAN Member States. Following the Regional Dialogue on Self-Assessment of AICHR Progress After 10 Years conducted in July-September 2021, we encouraged AICHR to retain its public outreach and increase impact in discharging its mandate of human rights promotion and protection in contributing to the building of a people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN.

41. We commended the important role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) to addresses humanitarian aspects of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in the region. We welcomed the inaugural launch of Friends of ARMAC (FOA) on 23 September 2021 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia to expand ARMAC's working relationship to deepen regional outreach and enable contributions from relevant stakeholders to humanitarian mine actions.

42. We remained steadfast in our commitment to combat transnational crime and welcomed the adoption of the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Combating Transnational Crime Post-COVID-19 Pandemic on 29 September 2021 by the 15th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), which signified our collective efforts and cross-sectoral coordination to address transnational crime in the post-pandemic era. We also stressed the importance for the full and effective implementation of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (Bali Work Plan) 2019-2025 to address the threat of radicalisation and violent extremism in the region in a holistic and inclusive manner with the involvement of a broader range of stakeholders including women and youth. We also welcomed the adoption of the Concept Paper on ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap by the 15th AMMTC, as the manifestation of our Leaders' Statement at the 35th ASEAN Summit in 2019, to pursue an ASEAN-wide border management arrangement based on existing institutions and guided by domestic laws and regulations of ASEAN Member States.

43. We congratulated the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) on the occasion of its 15th Anniversary and in this regard, welcomed the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration in Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the ADMM Towards A Future-Ready, Peaceful and Prosperous ASEAN and the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration by the ADMM-Plus in Commemoration of the 15th Anniversary of the ADMM on Promoting A Future-Ready, Peaceful and Prosperous ASEAN. We were pleased to observe further progress in ASEAN defence cooperation. We looked forward to the contribution of the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN) and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE) in fostering greater trust and cooperation among ASEAN Defence Establishments on cyber. We also commended the commitment of the ADMM-Plus to maintain ASEAN's leading role in the shaping of the regional security architecture. We noted that the ADMM recently performed a stocktaking exercise and adopted the Concept Paper on ADMM's External Engagements, which are aimed at affirming ASEAN Centrality and strengthening the working processes in the defence sector. We noted the conduct of the Post-Implementation Review of the Annualisation of the ADMM-Plus and commended the decision to continue the current frequency of the ADMM-Plus which underscores the importance of the ADMM-Plus as the region's main multilateral platforms for practical defence cooperation and strategic dialogue. We acknowledged the defence sector's continued commitment and contribution to ASEAN's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM), the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defence Experts and the ASEAN Military Medicine Conference (AMMC).

44. We commended the consistent efforts of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) in contributing to peace, security and prosperity in the region through various initiatives. We appreciated the continuation of ASEAN-IPR webinar series in 2021 with thematic focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding and relief efforts, youth as agents of peace, and the COVID-19 pandemic and peace in the region. We also noted ASEAN-IPR's continued support for ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) to implement the *ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security*.

45. We noted the UNGA Resolution A/RES/75/239 emphasising in the Preamble, the universal and unified character of the 1982 UNCLOS, and reaffirmed that the Convention sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector, and that its integrity needs to be maintained. 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-led mechanisms. We encouraged ASEAN Member States to intensify cooperation in promoting maritime security, safety and freedom of navigation and overflight, addressing transnational crime at sea, creating a conducive environment for peaceful settlement of disputes, ensuring marine sustainability, providing humanitarian assistance to persons and vessels in distress at sea, combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, promoting maritime connectivity and commerce, strengthening marine scientific research, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). We noted with satisfaction the successful convening of the 10th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and 8th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) held in December 2020, and reaffirmed the role of the AMF and EAMF in promoting maritime cooperation in the region through dialogue and consultation. Taking into account the cross-cutting nature of maritime cooperation, we encouraged stronger coordination among ASEAN cross-sectoral bodies and other relevant ASEAN mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts.

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

46. We congratulated Brunei Darussalam for its leadership and commended the AEC Sectoral Bodies for the timely delivery of the majority of the 2021 Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs). We were encouraged by the substantive progress achieved and looked forward to the completion of the remaining PEDs within the year. The completion of this year's PEDs is critical to our efforts in achieving the early and fast recovery of our economies from the pandemic and in building the region's long-term resilience as it tackles the impact of COVID-19, the challenges of long-term sustainable development, and the critical importance of ASEAN's digital transformation.

47. We were encouraged by the progress in the implementation of the AEC 2021 Annual Priorities, which will contribute towards the achievement of the AEC Blueprint 2025's strategic measures and will further deepen the region's economic integration.

48. We welcomed the submission of the Final Report of the MTR of the AEC Blueprint 2025, from which ASEAN can draw important lessons in moving towards 2025 and beyond. We commended the AEC Sectoral Bodies for their key accomplishments and the overall good progress they made from 2016 to 2020. We appreciated the thorough assessment and recommendations to improve the implementation of the Blueprint and address issues and challenges arising from emerging global developments presented in the MTR. We are encouraged by the pro-activeness of the AEC Sectoral Bodies in the work/action taken to follow up on the MTR recommendations and note with satisfaction

the early harvest output. We resolved that ASEAN needs to redouble its efforts and place greater emphasis on the quality of its actions and initiatives to achieve the AEC goals by 2025 and advance its economic integration agenda.

49. Recognising that digital transformation holds tremendous potential and brings many benefits to ASEAN, especially towards a sustainable and inclusive recovery from COVID-19, and noting the need for greater support for digital transformation in the region, we welcomed the endorsement of the *Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap: an ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda to Accelerate ASEAN's Economic Recovery and Digital Economic Integration (BSBR)*. The Roadmap highlights existing and new ASEAN initiatives that are crucial in supporting ASEAN's ongoing digital integration through the commencement of negotiations for an ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement by 2025. We are also pleased to adopt the *ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Advancing Digital Transformation in ASEAN* and called for strengthened regional digital integration and transformation to enhance the region's competitiveness, and turn the current pandemic crisis into an opportunity through digital transformation.

50. We appreciated the adoption of the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 (ADM2025) to guide the region's digital cooperation from 2021 to 2025 in order to transform ASEAN into a leading digital community and economic bloc, that is powered by secure and transformative digital services, technologies and ecosystem. We noted the good progress in the development of the *ASEAN Regional Action Plan (RAP) on the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State's Behavior in Cyberspace*, which identifies areas of capacity required to implement each of the Cyber Norms and the ongoing, as well as planned, regional cooperation activities in these areas, in order to underpin ASEAN's active contribution to maintaining peace and security in the cyberspace.

51. We noted the outcome of the 6th ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) held on 6 October 2021, where ASEAN Member States discussed the update to the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy for 2021 – 2025 and recognised the importance of strengthening cybersecurity in supporting economic growth for ASEAN Member States. We further noted the *Chairman's Statement of the 6th AMCC* which highlighted the importance of continuing to develop and implement coordinated regional cybersecurity capacity building programmes aimed at equipping ASEAN Member States with the policy, operational and technical capacities to implement the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in the use of ICTs.

52. We welcomed the ratification of the *ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce* and the launch of the *2021-2025 Work Plan on the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce*, which promotes a harmonised approach for all ASEAN Member States to implement the commitments made in the Agreement while aligning their laws and regulations with international best practices, as appropriate, to advance ASEAN's efforts towards an integrated digital economy.

53. We commended the achievements of the ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM) in working towards a sustainable and secure energy future for ASEAN as highlighted in the MTR of the AEC Blueprint 2025, and looked forward to the effective

implementation of the *ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) Phase II: 2021-2025*. We welcomed the adoption of the Bandar Seri Begawan Joint Declaration of the 39th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting on Energy Security and Energy Transition which reaffirms ASEAN's shared commitment and collective responsibility in ensuring energy security and accelerating an inclusive and just energy transition in the region. We looked forward to AMEM's endeavours in the future to explore an aspirational long-term regional target towards lower-emission energy systems in the region that can contribute to lowering greenhouse gas emissions, in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of ASEAN Member States. We also welcomed the adoption of the *Second Joint Statement of the Lao PDR-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project* in which the four countries reaffirmed their commitment to advancing multilateral cross-border power trade in ASEAN commencing 2022.

54. Recognising the traditional and new applications of minerals and the strong outlook of global mineral markets for both the short and medium term, we are committed to undertake concerted efforts in ASEAN minerals cooperation to seize the long-term growth opportunities afforded by a more minerals-intensive future. We welcomed minerals investments in all stages of the value chain to enable the implementation of leading practices in all aspects of mining policy, regulation and governance, including sustainable minerals development. We therefore tasked the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Minerals (AMMin) and its senior officials to undertake preparatory studies and supportive activities under the newly adopted ASEAN Minerals Cooperation Action Plan III, Phase 2: 2021-2025.

55. We acknowledged the new ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy (ATMS) 2021-2025, which sets out the marketing roadmap of ASEAN tourism for the next five years. We encouraged ASEAN Member States, along with private sectors, to strengthen collaboration in promoting the region's tourism industry, to ensure ASEAN's competitiveness as a single tourism destination. We welcomed the adoption of the Phnom Penh Declaration on a More Sustainable, Inclusive, and Resilient ASEAN Tourism and looked forward to the development of the work programme for its implementation to foster the ASEAN tourism recovery and a more resilient future.

56. We acknowledged that the pandemic has accelerated efforts for sustainability and long-term resilience, and noted that the Circular Economy with its aim for resource efficiency, plays a key role in this. We noted the adoption of the *Framework for Circular Economy* for the AEC, which sets out a structured pathway towards the ambitious long-term goals of resource efficiency, economic resilience, and sustainable growth for ASEAN, while building upon past and on-going ASEAN initiatives. We encouraged ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, partners, and stakeholders, to support the implementation of the Framework and help ASEAN achieve a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development.

57. We welcomed the initiative by the ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting (AFMGM) to develop an *ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance (ASEAN Taxonomy)* which will be the overarching guide for all ASEAN Member States, complementing their respective national sustainability initiatives and

serving as ASEAN's common language for sustainable finance. We also supported the establishment of the ASEAN Taxonomy Board (ATB) to develop, maintain and promote a multi-tiered taxonomy that will take into account ASEAN's needs as well as international aspirations and goals. We recognised the importance of cross-sectoral coordination in the development of an ASEAN Taxonomy that can be adopted by the ASEAN businesses. We noted the development of the ASEAN Taxonomy that will be announced at the COP26 in November 2021.

58. We noted with satisfaction the progress in the implementation of the key deliverables of the food, agriculture and forestry sector in 2021 and ASEAN Member States' efforts to minimise the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We encouraged ASEAN Member States to continue implementing the *2020 Statement of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) in Response to the Outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to Ensure Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition in ASEAN*. We looked forward to the development of the *ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Agriculture*, which is one of the key initiatives under the ACRF, to ensure sustainable and circular agriculture in the ASEAN region. As the development of sustainable and circular agriculture systems in ASEAN is a key step towards ensuring the continuous productivity, sustainability, and cost effectiveness of the food and agricultural sector, we encouraged ASEAN Member States, partners, and the private sector to collaborate and work with the ASEAN Secretariat to identify and implement relevant projects and activities to ensure sustainable, circular, and resilient agricultural systems.

59. We looked forward to the issuance of the *Phnom Penh Declaration on Sustainable Urban Mobility* by the ASEAN Transport Ministers, which encourages the promotion, development and operationalisation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) and the Metropolitan Transport Executive (MTE) model in ASEAN Member States.

60. We welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the ASEAN-European Union Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (AE CATA), which would significantly strengthen air connectivity between and beyond both regions, and enable greater business, trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people links, and looked forward to the signing of the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement at the earliest possible time.

61. We welcomed the adoption of the *ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework (AIFF)*, which sets out the principles and actions to facilitate the inflow of investment into the region as ASEAN steps up its efforts towards a comprehensive recovery. We looked forward to the implementation of the AIFF which is intended to improve accessibility and transparency of investment measures, streamline and speed up administrative procedures and requirements, and create favourable conditions for investment in the region, with a view to enhancing regional economic integration and allowing ASEAN to capture opportunities presented by shifts in global value chains as well as delivering tangible benefits to stakeholders. We also welcomed the entry into force of the *ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA)* and looked forward to the timely implementation of the Agreement.

62. Cognisant of the need to further streamline work on addressing non-tariff measures in order to facilitate trade flows in the region, we welcomed the endorsement of the *NTM Cost-Effectiveness Toolkit (NTM Toolkit)*, which aims to promote the adoption of good regulatory practices of simplifying import requirements and procedures to ultimately boost exports in the region. We also recognised efforts to facilitate the movement of trade in goods within the region and commended relevant officials for putting in place digital-based trade facilitation platforms. Encouraged by these positive developments, we looked forward to the full participation of other ASEAN Member States in these initiatives. We also looked forward to the end-to-end test of the electronic Phytosanitary (e-Phyto) Certificate between Indonesia and Thailand in 2021. We urged all ASEAN Member States to intensify efforts in further enhancing trade facilitation in the region through initiatives such as the ASEAN Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (AAMRA) on a pathfinder basis.

63. We welcomed the finalisation of the *MTR of the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016 – 2025 (SAP SMED 2025)*, the second phase of the SAP SMED 2025 implementation focusing on key elements to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as well as the progress made on this front especially in facilitating MSMEs to build back better post-pandemic. We welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Access, which serves as a one-stop business information gateway for international-oriented businesses, and the continuous effort to improve the ASEAN SME Academy. We encouraged the business communities in ASEAN and beyond to make full use of these resources and welcomed collaboration to strengthen ASEAN's resources for its MSMEs. We looked forward to the finalisation of the high-level guidelines on MSMEs crisis disaster and resilience as well as the implementation of the ASEAN Collaboration Framework towards Strengthening Evidence-based MSMEs Policies.

A Global ASEAN

64. We recognised that global and regional economic recovery remains uncertain. In supporting the regional economic recovery, we reaffirmed and underscored the importance of keeping markets open, maintaining supply chain resilience, supporting MSMEs, and increasing trade inter-linkages. In this regard, we noted the progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Australia and New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, China, India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), as well as negotiations and discussions on the upgrade of some of the FTAs, i.e., with Australia and New Zealand, China, India, and the ROK. We welcomed the full entry into force of the ASEAN – Hong Kong, China, Free Trade Agreement and the ASEAN – Hong Kong, China, Investment Agreement. We reiterated our resolve to ensure that the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) remains to be ASEAN-led and driven. We therefore underlined our commitment to expedite the ratification process for the RCEP Agreement and looked forward to its entry into force in early January 2022.

65. We welcomed the inaugural meeting between the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (AEM) and their counterparts from the United Kingdom (UK), which was held on the 15 September 2021, after the UK was conferred the status of Dialogue Partner, as well as the designation of the Philippines as the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-UK economic relations. We reaffirmed our commitment to an open, free, fair, inclusive, transparent, rules-based, and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system centered on the World Trade Organization (WTO).

66. We acknowledged the contribution of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to ASEAN, in particular, its support to the development of Brunei Darussalam's two (2) PEDs, namely the Framework on Circular Economy for the AEC; and the NTM Toolkit in cooperation with UNCTAD. We also appreciated ERIA's assistance and support through research and studies that contribute to ASEAN's economic priorities, including but not limited to the upgrade of the ATIGA, addressing issues pertaining to the mobility of professionals in ASEAN Member States especially in relation to the 4IR, the follow-up work on the ASEAN Seamless Trade Facilitation Indicators - Trade Transactions Cost (ASTFI-TTC II), and supply chain resilience.

67. We were pleased to note the progress on the development of the Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which will provide a framework for strengthening and further expanding cooperation on matters of mutual interest, and set out a strategic framework to enable efficient, coordinated and consistent collaboration around key priority areas within the economic and socio-cultural community pillars. We looked forward to its finalisation and its eventual translation into concrete cooperation initiatives in the spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit.

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

68. We welcomed the Report on the Follow Up to the Recommendations of Mid-Term Review of ASCC Blueprint 2025 that outlined the interim actions implemented by ASCC Sectoral Bodies since the release of the MTR. We encouraged ASCC Sectoral Bodies to keep the momentum going, and remain adaptive to emerging new challenges and opportunities – including increase in cross-pillar and cross-sector collaboration and engagement to prepare for a strong post-pandemic recovery. As the ASCC Blueprint 2025 enters the end term of its implementation, we underscored the importance of inclusive and holistic actions by the ASCC Sectoral Bodies in their activities and initiatives in addressing sustainable environment and climate, readiness for the future of work, inclusive, quality, and resilient education including technical and vocational education and training, civil service adaptability, children's rights, poverty eradication, gender mainstreaming, social work, protecting the vulnerable population, sports and youth development, and information awareness.

69. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Fostering the Civil Service's Adaptability to the New Challenges by the ASEAN Heads of Civil Service. It is a testament of ASEAN's commitment to promote adaptive and transformative leadership in civil service amidst the changing environments and challenges. We

underlined the importance of modernising civil service to support efficient and effective public service delivery. The adoption of the Framework of Strategic Partnerships by the ASEAN Heads of Civil Service would support closer cooperation with external parties in promoting good governance and agility in this digital era.

70. We adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Competitiveness, Resilience and Agility of Workers for the Future of Work. The Declaration reaffirmed our human-centred approach in preparing ASEAN workers' ability to adapt to the transformative changes exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We tasked the ASEAN Labour Ministers to implement the Declaration including measures to increase labour productivity and revitalise labour markets. We noted the on-going development of an ASEAN labour productivity index as a tool to measure and support the capacities of Member States to enhancing productivity of our workforce.

71. We acknowledged the continuous efforts towards the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases in ASEAN Member States by enhancing regional capacity and intersectoral collaboration through the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Reformulation and Production of Healthier Food and Beverage Options.

72. We noted with satisfaction the steady progress of work of the ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council following its establishment last year including the Council's Work Plan 2021-2030 and Rules of Procedure jointly adopted by the ASEAN Labour Ministers, ASEAN Education Ministers and ASEAN Economic Ministers. We looked forward to the Council's innovations to improve quality of TVET that could match the future skills demand. We further noted the adoption of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Roadmap of ASEAN Declaration on Human Resource Development for the Changing World of Work by the labour and education sectors. The Framework will support Member States in monitoring the improvement of our human resources' readiness for the future.

73. We were pleased with the implementation of the ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025 including the consolidation of baseline data from ASEAN Member States to monitor progress. We also noted the implementation of the ASEAN Guideline on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment towards Decent Work for All following its adoption last year. We noted the completion of the study on portability of social security rights of migrant workers between ASEAN Member States which will be followed up through initiatives endorsed by the labour sector. These are concrete translations of our commitment for inclusive and gender-responsive labour markets in the region.

74. We welcomed the implementation of activities under the *ASEAN Work Plan on Sports 2021-2025 and ASEAN-FIFA Collaboration Plan 2021-2022* for the advancement of sports cooperation in the region and its contribution to ASEAN Community-building, in line with the Kazan Action Plan. In addition, in recognising the achievements of ASEAN athletes at the recent Tokyo 2020 Olympic and

Paralympic Games, we welcomed the formulation of *Joint Statement by ASEAN Sports Ministers on Cementing a Strong Foundation for ASEAN Athletes at the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games*, which seeks to provide more competition opportunities for ASEAN athletes at the SEA Games to prepare and excel at the international sporting stage, and looked forward to its adoption at the 6th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports. Towards strengthening cooperation to raise the anti-doping capabilities of ASEAN Member States in line with the World Anti-Doping Code, we also looked forward to the signing of the MOU between ASEAN and World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) by the Secretary-General of ASEAN and Director General of WADA.

75. We reiterated the importance of engaging and promoting common values among youth as essential in developing a sense of belonging and inspiring them to take part in the ASEAN Community Building. We supported the ASEAN youth sector to continue addressing the commitments under the *ASEAN Declaration on the Adoption of the ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day* in the next five years, and strengthen youth's leadership and involvement in climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, as well as the green economy.

76. In conjunction with the 2021 International Year on Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, we welcomed the conduct of the ASEAN Creative Economy Business Forum (ACEBF) in November 2021 to be hosted by Indonesia which will focus on improving the digital economy through digital transformation, especially in the creative economy sector, and enhance the implementation of the ACRF. We encourage commitments to promote a sustainable creative economy, create business platforms to attract investment, and create a sense of belonging among stakeholders of the ASEAN creative economy through concrete and inclusive regional initiatives, and to take part in promoting the creative economy in the ASEAN Community as well as to instill ASEAN Identity.

77. We recognised that with the impact of the pandemic coupled with the escalating impact of climate change, it is crucial for ASEAN to step up preparations and be in a better position to handle the potential risk of fire and transboundary haze. In this regard, we reiterated our commitment and greater efforts toward vigilance, preparedness and early mobilisation of emergency response actions to mitigate fires during the dry season through the regional cooperative mechanisms established under the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) framework, while combating the pandemic. We noted the progress towards the finalisation of the Establishment Agreement and Host Country Agreement of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACC THPC) in Indonesia and the urgency to further intensify efforts to bring the negotiations to conclusion. We reiterated commitment to the full and effective implementation of the AATHP and looked forward to the finalisation of the Final Review of the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation that has allowed the region to take stock of the progress and sustain the momentum in ensuring demonstrable improvements to achieve the vision of a haze-free ASEAN.

78. We reaffirmed our commitment to combating marine plastic debris and commended the adoption of the *ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Member States*, which will serve as a guide for ASEAN's coordinated action in mitigating marine debris pollution in the region.

79. We stressed the importance of continued efforts in promoting biodiversity conservation, in order to contribute to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and to the ACRF for preventing future pandemics, with the support of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB). We noted the adoption of the ASEAN Joint Statement to the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP CBD-15). We further acknowledged continued efforts in addressing the issues of hazardous chemicals and waste, and noted the adoption of the ASEAN Joint Statement on Chemicals and Waste to the 2021 Meetings of the Conference of Parties to Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention (BRS).

80. We appreciated the efforts made towards charting the progress and challenges of inclusive and sustainable development in the ASEAN region through ASCC flagship publications. These publications include: (i) *ASEAN Development Outlook (ADO): Inclusive and Sustainable Development*; (ii) *ASEAN Gender Outlook: Achieving the SDGs for All and Leaving No Woman or Girl Behind*; and (iii) *ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security*. We encouraged policies and programmes to consider the recommendations laid out in these publications to aid ASEAN preparedness and work to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of ASEAN peoples, and successfully realise a resilient, sustainable, and dynamic community that leaves no one behind.

81. We reaffirmed our resolve to realise a disaster-resilient ASEAN Community through the continued implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021 – 2025 in line with the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. In this connection, we welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Adaptation to Drought (ARPA-AD) by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), as the follow-up to the ASEAN Declaration on the Strengthening of Adaptation to Drought which was adopted in November 2020. We encouraged ASEAN Member States to fully implement the Plan of Action to achieve the sustainable management of drought through comprehensively preventing and mitigating its impact on the livelihood of people, natural resources, ecosystem, agriculture, energy, and socio-economic development.

82. We appreciated the adoption of the *ASEAN Disaster Resilience Outlook* which offers a future-oriented and innovative approach to address emerging risks and challenges, that will support the realisation of ASEAN's aspiration to be a global leader in disaster management by 2025. We welcomed the adoption of (i) *the ASEAN Mapping Exercise to Promote Synergy with Other Relevant Sectoral Bodies and Entities Associated with ASEAN on Disaster Management*, (ii) *the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management (JSPADM) IV 2021-2025*, and (iii) *the ASEAN Framework on Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Disaster Management 2021-2025*, that will enhance the materialisation of the ASEAN

Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region.

83. We were encouraged by the completion and official handover of the ASEAN Village on 23 June 2021, coordinated by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) to the Government of Palu City, Central Sulawesi of Indonesia. We appreciated the contributions of the people of Brunei Darussalam, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, the Government of Australia, and the Direct Relief to this groundbreaking project, exemplifying the spirit of "One ASEAN One Response" as well as the essence of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship deliverable of ASEAN SHIELD, enabling the people of ASEAN to contribute during natural disasters.

84. We also welcomed the commitment of the ASCC Sectoral Bodies in moving towards ASEAN 2025 and in continuously addressing sectoral and cross-sectoral priority issues through their respective post-2020 Sectoral Work Plans / Work Programmes. The alignment of Work Plans / Work Programmes with recommendations of the MTR of the ASCC Blueprint 2025, 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other regional priorities such as the ACRF, will lead to consistent efforts in helping the community advance to 2025 and beyond.

85. We reaffirmed our support for a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar by providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process, and promoting sustainable development in Rakhine State. We stressed the importance of the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure, and dignified manner, in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh to facilitate the repatriation process. We further underscored the importance of efforts to address the root causes of the conflict in Rakhine State. We appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General of ASEAN, supported by the Ad Hoc Support Team of the ASEAN Secretariat (AHAST), in leading the implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) which has been making progress. We appreciated the contribution from ASEAN Member States and some external partners in supporting ASEAN activities, including the prioritised projects in Rakhine State to facilitate the repatriation process and to promote inclusive and sustainable development, including to provide basic services and creating livelihood opportunities for the displaced persons. We also looked forward to the conduct of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) when conditions allow and encouraged the Secretary-General of ASEAN to continue identifying possible areas for ASEAN to effectively facilitate the repatriation process.

86. We commended the successful conduct of the Pledging Conference to Support ASEAN's Humanitarian Assistance in Myanmar on 18 August 2021, led by the Secretary-General of ASEAN in his capacity as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC), and supported by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), which raised the equivalent of almost USD 8 million in monetary pledges and in-kind contributions of medicines, medical supplies and equipment. We acknowledged that the first batch of medical equipment and supplies have been handed over to the Myanmar Red Cross

Society (MRCS) on 15 September 2021 for immediate distribution to the identified medical facilities in support of Myanmar's COVID-19 response, in partnership with the AHA Centre. We reiterated the importance of ensuring that ASEAN's Humanitarian Assistance in Myanmar will directly benefit the people of Myanmar in accordance with humanitarian principles and irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, socio-economic and political views. We appreciated the contribution of the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN's external partners in contributing to the humanitarian assistance efforts. We encouraged more partners to come forward and support the ASEAN humanitarian assistance efforts, as part of the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus agreed at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in April this year.

ASEAN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

87. We underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN Centrality, unity in our engagement with ASEAN's external partners, including through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN-Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ADMM-Plus, in order to build mutual trust and confidence as well as reinforce an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre.

88. We agreed to further strengthen partnerships and cooperation with our external partners, thus contributing to the continued efforts towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and our proactive response to challenges, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and opportunities thereon. We looked forward to the 1st ASEAN-Australia Summit, the 24th ASEAN-China Summit, the 18th ASEAN-India Summit, the 24th ASEAN-Japan Summit, the 22nd ASEAN-R.O.K. Summit, the 4th ASEAN-Russia Summit to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations, and the 9th ASEAN-United States Summit on 26-28 October 2021. We also looked forward to the convening of the ASEAN-China Special Summit to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations in November 2021, and the ASEAN-E.U. Commemorative Summit in Brussels in 2022 to commemorate the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations as well as to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in 2023. We further looked forward to the "ASEAN-India Friendship Year" to commemorate the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India Relations.

89. We welcomed the conferment of Dialogue Partner status to the United Kingdom (UK) at the 54th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, in accordance with the Guidelines for ASEAN's External Relations (2014) and the List of Criteria for Dialogue Partnership (2021) and noted that its Country Coordinator will commence in reverse alphabetical order, starting with Brunei Darussalam for the current cycle (2021-2024).

90. We tasked the Ministers to commence a comprehensive review of the moratorium on new dialogue partnerships, in conjunction with the work of the ASEAN Community Vision Post-2025, with the objective to enhance the ASEAN Community and advance ASEAN's relations with external parties based on the principles of strengthening ASEAN Centrality, openness and inclusivity as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the TAC and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

91. We reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen ASEAN's partnerships with external partners including the 96 Non-ASEAN Ambassadors Accredited to ASEAN (NAAAs), as well as regional and international organisations, including the United Nations to address global challenges such as climate change and sustainable development. We also welcomed the role of the 54 ASEAN Committees in Third Countries and International Organisations (ACTCs) in promoting ASEAN's interest and forging partnerships in the respective countries and international organisations.

92. We reaffirmed the importance of the APT cooperation framework in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the East Asian region. We underscored the need to further strengthen and deepen functional cooperation under the APT framework, which plays a key role in regional community building in East Asia, with ASEAN as the driving force. We agreed to further enhance APT cooperation in wide-ranging areas through the implementation of the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022 and the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) II Recommendations and looked forward to the development of a successor Work Plan (2023-2027). We remain committed to further strengthening APT cooperation in response to emerging challenges especially in the post-COVID-19 era and in this regard, we looked forward to the adoption of the *APT Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on Mental Health Amongst Adolescents and Young Children* at the 24th APT Summit.

93. 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 East Asian region. We also emphasised the need to strengthen EAS collaboration, based on the principle of ASEAN Centrality, and to sustain its strategic value and relevance in response to emerging issues and challenges that affect peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region, as well as the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as mental health, and in facilitating a sustainable comprehensive recovery. We agreed to further enhance EAS practical cooperation in the areas under the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiatives (2018-2022) and looked forward to the development of a successor Plan of Action (2023-2027). In this regard, we looked forward to the adoption of the EAS Leaders Statements, namely the *EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation*, *EAS Leaders' Statement on Economic Growth Through Tourism Recovery* and the *EAS Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Recovery* at the 16th EAS on 27 October 2021. We also looked forward to the EAS Workshop on Mental Health Cooperation in the COVID-19 Recovery to be co-hosted by Brunei Darussalam and Australia in November 2021. 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 as well as exchanging information on regional development cooperation initiatives and security policies and initiatives, and discussions on the evolving regional architecture.

94. We reiterated the importance of the ARF as a key ASEAN-led mechanism for dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern to build mutual trust and confidence in the region. We noted with satisfaction the progress of cooperation in the ARF, and commended the provisional measures undertaken to ensure the continuity of cooperation and operations of the ARF amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were pleased to note that the ARF has continued to further enhance its effectiveness and maintain its relevance in the evolving regional security architecture, including its work on cybersecurity and promoting the youth, peace and security agenda, through the adoption of the *Joint Statement to Promote the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda* at the 28th ARF in August 2021.

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

95. We reaffirmed the objectives and principles of the AOIP, which guides ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. We noted that various ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, had discussed the implementation of the AOIP. We further recalled the ADMM-Plus' recognition of ASEAN's leading role in the shaping the regional economic and security architecture, by promoting close cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms, under the guiding principles reflected in the ASEAN Charter, the TAC, the Bali Principles, and reconfirmed in the AOIP. We agreed that ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Plus One mechanisms, the EAS, the ADMM-Plus, and the ARF could serve as useful platforms for dialogue and cooperation to implement the AOIP. We looked forward to cooperative activities on the four identified key areas, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN SDGs 2030, economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

Timor-Leste's Application for ASEAN Membership

96. We noted the outcomes of the Virtual Meeting between the Senior Economic Official's Meeting (SEOM) and Timor-Leste held on 7-9 December 2020 and the finalisation of the *In-depth Assessment on the Implications of Timor-Leste's Accession to ASEAN's Economic Agreements* in July 2021. We noted the progress made in preparing for the AEC and ASCC Fact-Finding Missions (FFMs) to Timor-Leste. We looked forward to the convening of the FFMs, when circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic allow, and to the outcomes of the FFMs, after which a comprehensive assessment of Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership would be developed. In line with the APSC FFM, we reaffirmed our commitment to continue exploring ways to provide capacity building assistance to Timor-Leste, especially through participation in non-policy making activities in ASEAN. In this regard, we noted the approval by the 29th ACC Meeting of the Guidelines for Timor-Leste's Participation in ASEAN Activities for Capacity-Building Purposes. We further noted the importance of developing a timeline and roadmap to guide ASEAN in furthering the consideration of Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN Membership, once the physical AEC and ASCC FFMs to Timor-Leste have been completed.

Regional and International Issues

South China Sea

97. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some ASEAN Member States on the land reclamations, activities, serious incidents in the area, including damage to the marine environment, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions, and may undermine peace, security, and stability in the region. We reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability, and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation. We further reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of 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 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

98. 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 DOC in its entirety. We warmly welcomed the continuously 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) consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, within a mutually-agreed timeline. We welcomed the continuation of the second reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and commended the provisional agreement on the Preamble section and the progress of negotiations on the Objectives section under the General Provisions. We recognised the importance of the negotiations through virtual platforms while physical meetings remain as the primary modality, and encouraged further progress towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. 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.

Developments in the Korean Peninsula

99. 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 United States and Democratic People's Republic of Korea 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 reiterated our readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.

Situation in the Middle East

100. We expressed concern over the recent developments in the Middle East region. In this regard, we welcomed the ceasefire that took effect on 21 May 2021 as a step toward creating conditions conducive for dialogue. We reiterated the need for a comprehensive, just, and sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East region. We urged both sides to actively take positive steps to allow for negotiations to gain traction and work together towards the resumption of negotiations to achieve enduring peace. We fully support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine with the realisation of two states, Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Developments in Myanmar

101. We discussed the recent developments in Myanmar and expressed concern over the situation in the country, including reports of fatalities and violence. We also heard calls for the release of political detainees including foreigners. We called on Myanmar to fulfil its commitment to the Five-Point Consensus of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021 and acceptance for the timely and complete implementation of the Five-Point Consensus namely, the immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties to exercise utmost restraint; constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people; the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair to facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary-General of ASEAN; ASEAN to provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre; and the Special Envoy and delegation to visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned. We welcomed the efforts by the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar and called on all parties concerned in Myanmar to swiftly and fully implement the Five-Point Consensus, including by facilitating the visit of the Special Envoy to Myanmar to build trust and confidence with full access to all parties concerned. We welcomed the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar, through the AHA

Centre. We welcomed the continued support from our external partners for ASEAN's efforts in the swift and complete implementation of the Five-Point Consensus, particularly on humanitarian assistance.

102. While respecting the principle of non-interference, we reaffirmed our adherence to the rule of law, good governance, the principles of democracy and constitutional government as well as the need to strike an appropriate balance to the application of ASEAN principles on the situation in Myanmar. We recalled the decision reached by the Emergency ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (EAMM) on 15 October 2021. We reiterated that Myanmar remains a member of the ASEAN family and recognised that Myanmar needs both time and political space to deal with its many and complex challenges. We expressed the view that Myanmar's national preoccupation should not affect ASEAN Community building process and decision making. In this regard, we remain committed to support Myanmar in its efforts to return to normalcy in accordance with the will of the people of Myanmar.
