

## Overview of ASEAN-Republic of Korea Dialogue Relations

### Introduction

1. ASEAN and the Republic of Korea (ROK) initiated sectoral dialogue relations in November 1989. The ROK was accorded a full Dialogue Partner status by ASEAN at the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur. The partnership was elevated to a Summit level in 1997 in Kuala Lumpur. The ROK acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 2004.
2. The ASEAN-ROK relationship reached a new height with the signing of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership at the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-ROK Summit on 30 November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR and the adoption of the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action (POA) to implement the Joint Declaration at the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-ROK Summit on 13 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
3. The 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-ROK Summit in October 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam agreed to elevate ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations from comprehensive cooperation to strategic partnership. The Leaders adopted the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity and its Plan of Action for the period of 2011-2015. The new Plan of Action for the period 2016-2020 was adopted in 2015.
4. The ROK established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta in September 2012 and appointed its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN in October 2012.
5. In 2014, ASEAN and the ROK celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations with a Commemorative Summit held on 11-12 December 2014 in Busan. The Commemorative Summit adopted the *Joint Statement on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations: Our Future Vision of ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership, "Building Trust, Bringing Happiness"* renewing the commitments to bring the ASEAN-ROK relations to new heights.
6. In 2017, President Moon Jae-in of ROK announced the "New Southern Policy" which aims to substantially elevate partnership between ASEAN and the ROK to a higher level. The new policy is built upon the "3 P" pillars (People, Prosperity, and Peace) corresponding with the 3 pillars of ASEAN Community, with People placed at the center of the policy. The elevation of cooperation is to be achieved through strengthening bilateral ties with ASEAN Member States and reinforcing the ROK's participation in ASEAN led-mechanisms.
7. In 2019, ASEAN and the ROK celebrate 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations with a Commemorative Summit held in Busan, the ROK on 25-26 November 2019. The Commemorative Summit adopted the ASEAN-ROK Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership to set out strategic framework to advance ASEAN-ROK relations in the coming years .
8. In 2020, President Moon Jae-in announced the "New Southern Policy Plus", the upgraded version of the "New Southern Policy Plus to further advance ASEAN-ROK

relations in a more practical way in line with the priorities of ASEAN in the post COVID-19 pandemic recovery. At the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2021, the Leaders adopted Joint Statement on Enhancing ASEAN-ROK cooperation for People, Peace and Prosperity to promote practical cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK, including enhancing synergy between the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and the New Southern Policy Plus for the regional recovery.

### **Political and Security Cooperation**

9. ASEAN-ROK cooperation in the political and security fields has been strengthened through existing mechanisms such as the ASEAN-ROK Summit, Ministerial Meetings, ASEAN-ROK Dialogue and Senior Officials Meetings. The ROK has been actively engaging in ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the APT, the EAS, ARF, and ADMM-Plus.

10. The ROK became a participant of the ARF since its inception in 1994 and plays an active role in its evolution since then. The ROK is an active contributor to the ARF Annual Security Outlook since its first publication in 2000. The ROK is co-chairing the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ARF ISM on NPD) with Indonesia and Japan for the 2018-2021 cycle. The ROK is also co-chairing the ARF Table-Top Exercise on Response Capabilities to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Incidents along with the Philippines and the United States in the Inter-Sessional Year (ISY) 2020-2021.

11. The ROK has taken an active role in the ADMM-Plus in fostering practical cooperation in its seven priority areas, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), maritime security, military medicine, counter terrorism, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action and cyber security. The ROK co-chaired the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations (EWG on PKO) with Cambodia for the period of 2014-2017 and the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security with Singapore for the period of 2017-2020. The ROK is co-chairing the ADMM-Plus EWG on Cyber Security with Malaysia for the 2021-2023 cycle.

12. The ASEAN-ROK Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism was signed by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the ROK at the margins of the 38<sup>th</sup> AMM in July 2005 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The ASEAN-ROK Senior Officials' Consultations on Transnational Crime (SOMTC+ROK Consultations) was held for the first time on 9 June 2006 in Bali, Indonesia and the inaugural ASEAN Plus Republic of Korea Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC + ROK) Consultation was convened on 28 November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matter (ASOD) – ROK Coordination Meeting has been held 8 times since 2011.

13. The ROK has been supporting the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in the promotion of human rights in the areas of implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) and management of environmental impact assessment from a human right-based approach.

14. The ROK also supported ASEAN's effort in peace and reconciliation through ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN IPR).

### **Economic Cooperation**

15. On trade and investment cooperation, the ROK remains an important partner to ASEAN. The ROK is the the fourth largest trading partner of ASEAN with two-way trade reaching USD 154.2 billion in 2020. Meanwhile, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in 2020 from the ROK to ASEAN recorded at USD 6.8 billion, making the ROK as ASEAN's fifth largest external source of FDI income.

16. The ASEAN Member States and the ROK signed the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation in 13 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. The ASEAN-ROK Trade in Goods (AKTIG) Agreement was signed on 24 August 2006 and took effect in June 2007. Following the Trade in Goods Agreement, the ASEAN-ROK Trade in Services Agreement was signed on 21 November 2007 and came into force on 1 May 2009. The ASEAN-ROK Investment Agreement was signed on 2 June 2009 and took effect on 1 September 2009. Subsequently, the ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Agreement (AKFTA) came into effect on 1 January 2010.

17. The Third Protocol to Amend the AKTIG Agreement was signed by all Parties on 22 November 2015, aiming at boosting bilateral trade through new commitments on customs procedures and trade facilitation and the inclusion of the Parties' line-by-line Tariff Reduction Schedules (TRS). The Third Protocol has entered into force for the ROK and all ASEAN Member States, except Viet Nam, which is still undertaking internal procedures for ratification.

18. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the ROK established a special fund called ASEAN-ROK Economic Cooperation (AKEC) Fund with initial contribution of US\$531,915 in 2008 for the implementation of cooperation projects under the purview of the ASEAN-ROK Working Group on Economic Cooperation (AK-WGEC) established in 2006. Since 2011, the ROK has annually contributed US\$500,000 towards the AKEC Fund.

19. The Dialogue between the ASEAN Secretary-General and the Association of ASEAN Korean Chambers (AAKC) was established and held for the first time on 24 November 2019 in Busan. This is a new channel of communion for both sides to exchange views on ways to enhance the business and investment environment in ASEAN.

20. ASEAN-ROK's cooperation in transport has been conducted through the implementation of the ASEAN-ROK Transport Cooperation Roadmaps. The ASEAN-ROK Transport Cooperation Roadmap 2021 – 2025, which was adopted at the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-ROK Transport Ministers Meeting on 22 November 2020, sets out the potential projects and activities of cooperation in the areas of human resources development, development consulting, infrastructure feasibility study, as well as technology and management . ASEAN and the ROK have been negotiating the Regional Air Services Agreement to further enhancing air transport connectivity between both sides.

21. On information and communication technology (ICT) cooperation, the ROK has implemented a series of activities under ASEAN-ROK ICT Partnership 2017-2021, focusing on strategic areas such as innovation, connectivity, human resource development and information security.

22. The ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC) was established in 13 March 2009 in Seoul, the ROK. The Centre plays a pivotal role to increase the volume of trade, accelerate investment flow, invigorate tourism, and enrich cultural exchanges between ASEAN and the ROK. Since 2013, AKC regularly organises the ASEAN Connectivity Forum in Seoul, ROK to keep the ROK business communities abreast of the connectivity-related infrastructure projects in the 10 ASEAN Member States, thus contributing to connected and integrated ASEAN as well as mutually beneficial partnership between ASEAN and the ROK.

### **Socio-Cultural Cooperation**

23. ASEAN and the ROK put an emphasis on people to people exchange with a view to deepen friendship and understanding among their people. Various projects and activities have been undertaken to increase people to people exchanges between the two sides including annual programmes such as the ASEAN-ROK Media People Exchanges Programme and the ASEAN-ROK Film Leaders Incubator (FLY), both of which have been implemented since 2012. ASEAN and the ROK is currently exploring the possibility to advance the cooperation in film development and organisation.

24. In the area of youth, ASEAN and the ROK have conducted seven recurring projects since 1998 including ASEAN-Korea Youth Exchange and Cultural Community Building Programme; ASEAN-Korea Frontiers Forum; ASEAN-Korea Youth Square; ASEAN-Korea Forum and Advanced Seminar; ASEAN-Korea Future-oriented Cooperation Project: Youth Exchange Programme; ASEAN-Korea Youth Taekwondo Cultural Exchange Camp; and ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Project on Education and Exchange Program for Young Scholars in Women's Studies. These projects are intended to provide multi-cultural experience and to deepen partnership between ASEAN and the ROK.

25. On education, the ROK has convened Training Projects for ASEAN children's librarians since 2010, aiming at developing children's library service and enhancing professionalism of children's librarians in ASEAN Member States. The ROK has also provided funding for ASEAN-ROK Scholarship for Korean Studies Programme coordinated by the ASEAN University Network (AUN). A flagship project entitled "Higher Education for ASEAN Talents: Scholarship Opportunity for ASEAN faculty Members in the ROK" has been implemented since 2020 to provide faculty members from ASEAN Member States (AMS) who already hold a master's degree with the opportunity to obtain a doctoral degree in the ROK thereby contributing towards improving the competitiveness of the ASEAN higher education sector and fostering closer ties between ASEAN and the ROK.

26. Cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK on culture has been promoted including through various activities during the ASEAN-ROK Culture Exchange Year in 2017. The ASEAN Culture House (ACH), which was established in Busan, the ROK on 1 September 2017, is the first of its kind among ASEAN's dialogue partners and serves as a venue to

further promote mutual understanding between the peoples of ASEAN and the ROK. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ASEAN Cultural Center in Bangkok and the ACH was signed in 2019 to promote cooperation between the two centers in facilitating mutual understanding and cultural exchanges between ASEAN and the ROK.

27. The 2019 Special AMCA Plus ROK and SOMCA Plus ROK were held on 23-24 October 2019 in Gwangju. Several projects supported by the ROK in the area of culture that currently ongoing include Development of Digital Heritage Contents with UNESCO World Heritage of ASEAN - Year 2 & 3, Symposium and Youth Forum on ASEAN Identity and Strengthening ASEAN-ROK Cooperation: Now and Beyond, ASEAN-Korea Music Festival (AKMF), and KONNECT ASEAN.

28. On health, the ROK supported ASEAN in addressing Covid-19 pandemic through a project on *Enhancing COVID-19 Detection Capacity for COVID-19 in ASEAN Member State* with a total budget of USD 5 million. The project involves provision of PCR equipment and corresponding test kits to the Ministries of Health of ASEAN Member States. The ROK contributed USD 6 million to COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. ASEAN and the ROK are enhancing health cooperation through the establishment of the ASEANROK Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) and ASEAN-ROK Health Ministers Meeting with the inaugural meetings held in October and November 2021 respectively.

29. On forest cooperation, the Agreement on the Establishment of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) entered into force on 27 April 2018. ASEAN-ROK High Level Meeting on Forestry 2019 was held on 31 October 2019 in Seoul and adopted the Declaration on Forest Cooperation for Peace and Prosperity.

30. On environment and climate change cooperation, ASEAN-ROK cooperation to address the issue of land and forest degradation has been strengthened through a flagship project on Restoration of Degraded Ecosystem and Conservation of Biodiversity in the ASEAN Region (AKECOP). ASEAN and ROK also published a "Field Guide to the ASEAN Waterbirds" as a part of the AKECOP project. ASEAN-ROK Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change were held on 16 September 2021 and the development of the draft workplan for ASEAN-ROK Carbon Dialogue to support the implementation of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) Action Plan is ongoing.

31. In the area of disaster management, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) and the National Fire Agency of the Republic of Korea signed a Memorandum of Intent (MOI) by ad-referendum in November 2019 to strengthen cooperation and to seek areas for further collaboration in the field of disaster management. The ROK contributed USD 500,000 in 2020 and USD 1 million in 2021 to ASEAN for humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

## **Connectivity and Narrowing Development Gap**

32. ASEAN and the ROK have developed a platform of cooperation on connectivity through the meetings between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the ROK's Task Force on ASEAN Connectivity.

33. The ROK supports ASEAN efforts in narrowing the development gap through the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) projects. Its supports include sharing its experiences in economic and social development by dispatching volunteers under its World Friends Korea initiative.

34. The ROK also supports sub-regional economic cooperation frameworks, including the Mekong-ROK Cooperation and BIMP-EAGA-ROK Cooperation. The 1<sup>st</sup> Mekong-ROK Summit was held on 27 November 2019 in Busan. The ROK established the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund (USD 4 million) and BIMP-EAGA-ROK Cooperation Fund (USD 1 million) to support the projects under sub-regional cooperation

35. The 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-ROK Infrastructure Ministerial Meeting was held on 17 September 2018 in Seoul. Under the theme of 'Infrastructure development and public land use' and 'Sustainable smart city and infrastructure', this meeting discussed ASEAN-ROK bilateral cooperation projects in the fields of smart city development, smart infrastructure and efficient land use. ASEAN-ROK Cooperation on smart cities has been promoted with the first ASEAN-ROK Ministerial Meeting on Smart City held on 25 November 2019, in Busan.

## **The ROK's Support to Development Cooperation**

36. The ROK Government launched the ASEAN-ROK Special Cooperation Fund (SCF) in 1990 with an aim to enhance people-to-people exchanges between the two sides. In 1996, the ASEAN-ROK Future-Oriented Cooperation Project Fund (FOCF) was also launched in order to implement cooperation projects in the fields of human resource development, science and technology, governance, culture and sports, and others. The SCF and the FOCF were merged into the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund (AKCF) in 2019 to provide funding for the implementation of cooperation projects initiated by ASEAN Member States and the ROK under the programme-based approach. As part of New Southern Policy, the ROK has doubled its contribution to the AKCF starting 2019 to support more cooperation programmes and projects. The ROK contributes USD 14 million for AKCF annually.

37. The ASEAN-ROK Programme Management Team (AKPMT) was established in December 2016 to work for the effective utilization, management and execution of AKCF funded projects.

