

**ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate
24 August 2023, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. ASEAN Member States (AMS) met with the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on 24 August 2023 for the first ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change. The Ministerial Dialogue was co-chaired by Bounkham Vorachit, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR and John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change (SPEC), United States of America (U.S.). Michael Regan, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. provided recorded remarks, and Jane Nishida, Assistant Administrator for the EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs attended the meeting in person.
2. The Dialogue noted the strengthening of ASEAN-US cooperation on the environment and climate, welcoming the first meeting of ASEAN and the U.S. on these topics, and the critical need to work together in support of AMS efforts to achieve ambitious national and regional climate and environment goals. The Meeting acknowledged the increasing climate risks associated with a global temperature exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius, and the need to accelerate efforts to reduce emissions from all sectors, as well as to increase climate adaptation and resilience. The United States encouraged all AMS to pursue ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies aligned with a pathway to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, as well as robust National Adaptation Plans.
3. Given the climate crisis presents multiple challenges and opportunities, the United States government expressed its intention to continue to engage and provide support to AMS as part of a multi-agency effort including the State Department, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), EPA, Department of Energy (DOE), and others.
4. The Meeting endorsed the ASEAN-U.S. Environment and Climate Work Plan and welcomed the Plan's comprehensive approach which focuses on four areas of ASEAN-U.S. cooperation: (1) enhancing climate ambition and regional mitigation and adaptation; (2) innovation for a low-carbon future; (3) mobilizing climate finance; and (4) supporting environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. The Meeting welcomed the alignment of the Plan's priority areas with the eight core themes of the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Plan of Action, priority areas under the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Plan of Action, and support of AMS targets to achieve NDCs. The United States coordinates with relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, including the

ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) to implement programs under each priority area.

5. The United States presented information on its programs and activities under the ASEAN-U.S. Environment and Climate Work Plan. These include the Climate Solutions Hub, SERVIR Southeast Asia (SERVIR), Global Methane Initiative, the Transparency Accelerator for Greenhouse Gas Inventories Initiative, and the US-ASEAN Climate Solutions Hub. The Hub is a \$3.5 million program to deliver technical and analytical assistance to support ASEAN countries in their NDC implementation, reporting, and updating. It will provide grant funding for capacity building, and ad-hoc request assistance for both short-term NDC implementation and long-term climate strategies. SERVIR, a partnership between USAID and NASA, builds climate resilience by using publicly available satellite data to improve decision making on regional climate challenges, including disaster preparedness and response, food security, water resource and land management, and air quality. In collaboration with ACE, the SPP is supporting the development of the ASEAN Power Grid to expand power trade and integrate greater shares of variable renewable energy in the ASEAN region. This collaboration on clean energy and battery storage will assist the region's renewable energy deployment and transition to net-zero emissions.
6. The United States also welcomed progress made in establishing the ASEAN Center for Climate Change (ACCC) and has previously provided technical expertise from the U.S. DOE's Oakland National Laboratory. The United States supported its efforts to promote regional knowledge and climate research, noting the importance of continued capacity building in enabling improved implementation of climate actions and ambitious NDCs. The ACCC will serve as a think tank, strategic coordinator, and knowledge hub for regional climate science and policy.
7. The United States and ASEAN recognized transboundary haze as a top environmental concern in the region and will further explore possible cooperation on this topic, including opportunities to support the establishment and operationalization of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution (ACC THPC) in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, as well as ways to address pollution control, land and/or forest fire prevention.