

## **OVERVIEW OF ASEAN-UNITED STATES COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

- Since its establishment in 1977, the ASEAN-U.S. dialogue relations has evolved from exchange of views on political and security issues to a wide range of cooperation areas across the three ASEAN Community pillars.
- At the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit in November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, the Leaders announced the elevation of the ASEAN-U.S. dialogue relations to a strategic level. The goals and vision of this Strategic Partnership were pursued through the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership for the period of 2016 to 2020. Following the elevation of the dialogue relations, the U.S. hosted the ASEAN-U.S. Special Leaders' Summit on 15-16 February 2016 in Sunnylands, California, U.S.A.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit was held on 13 November 2017 in Manila to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ASEAN-U.S. dialogue relations. A number of activities have been held throughout the year to commemorate this auspicious occasion, including the visit of U.S. Vice President Mike Pence to the ASEAN Secretariat on 20 April 2017.
- The Leaders at the ASEAN-U.S. Special Summit to commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations held on 12-13 May 2022 in Washington D.C. adopted the Joint Vision Statement, which reflects the breadth and depth of ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership.
- The Leaders at the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit on 12 November 2022 held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, agreed to establish the ASEAN-U.S. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) and issued the ASEAN-U.S. Leaders Statement on the Establishment of the ASEAN-U.S. CSP. To substantiate and deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership, an Annex to the ASEAN – U.S. Plan of Action 2021-2025 was adopted at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference with the United States on 14 July 2023.
- At the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit on 6 September 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Leaders adopted the ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific with a view to enhancing cooperation in the four priority areas under the AOIP within ASEAN-led mechanism to promote cooperation, peace, security, stability and robust, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development and growth in the region.

### **POLITICAL-SECURITY COOPERATION**

- The U.S. continues to engage with ASEAN in the political-security pillar through their active participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting

Plus (ADMM-Plus), the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). Areas of mutual interest include maritime security, cyber security, and combatting transnational crime, including terrorism and trafficking in persons (TIP), among others. Initiatives on this front include the first ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise, held on 2 – 6 September 2019 in international waters of Southeast Asia, the third iteration of the Cyber Policy Dialogue held on 1 February 2023, following previous iterations of the Dialogue held in 2019 and 2021, as well as the Table-top Exercise on Response Capabilities to CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) Incidents on 13-15 June 2022 (co-chaired with the Republic of Korea and the Philippines. An ASEAN-U.S. Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting was held on 15 November 2023, on the sidelines of 17<sup>th</sup> ADMM/10<sup>th</sup> ADMM-Plus in Jakarta, Indonesia.

- Cooperation in combatting transnational crime and other non-traditional security issues has been strengthened through the U.S.' engagement with the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC). The SOMTC + U.S. Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime (2023-2026) was adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> SOMTC+US Consultation. To date, fifteen SOMTC+U.S. Consultations have been held, where the last meeting was held in 2023 at Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
- The U.S. acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in July 2009 at the ASEAN PMC+1 Session with the U.S. in Phuket, Thailand, and was among the first Dialogue Partners to appoint its dedicated Ambassador to ASEAN and establish a Mission to ASEAN in 2010.

## **ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

- The U.S. remains an important trading partner of ASEAN with the total two-way trade in 2023 reaching US\$ 400.5 billion<sup>1</sup>, making it the second largest trading partner of ASEAN among Dialogue Partners. The U.S. is ASEAN's largest external source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2022 with a total inflow amounting to US\$ 36.9 billion, accounting for 16.4% of total ASEAN FDI.<sup>2</sup>
- The ASEAN Economic Ministers-U.S. Trade Representative (AEM-USTR) Consultations and ASEAN Senior Economic Officials-Assistant USTR (SEOMAUSTR) Consultations are held annually to promote trade and investment flow between both sides as well as exchange views on a range of economic issues.

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<sup>1</sup> ASEAN Trade Statistics Database preliminary data as of March 2024.

<sup>2</sup> ASEAN FDI Database as of 1 December 2023.

- Both sides continue to intensify trade and investment ties between the two regions, including through the implementation of the 2023-2024 ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) and the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Work Plan, as endorsed by the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the U.S. Trade Representative Consultations (AEM-USTR Consultations) in August 2023. Within these frameworks, ASEAN and the U.S. affirmed their commitments for stronger cooperations, including through activities on the digital economy, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) development, trade facilitation, intellectual property rights, sustainability, good regulatory practices, labour, and agriculture, among others.
- ASEAN and the U.S. are working to solidify institutional links between ASEAN sectoral bodies under the AEC pillar and the U.S. counterparts through new Dialogues on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Aviation. The U.S. has also committed to supporting ASEAN Member States in improving the skills of their workforce and enhancing their economic competitiveness through initiatives in education and training, SME development, youth entrepreneurship, and women empowerment.
- The ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies meet every year with the U.S. Treasury Deputy to exchange views on global and regional macroeconomic policies and outlooks. This consultation mechanism is aimed at improving mutual understanding and ensuring policy complementarities to maintain resilience and growth for both sides.
- At the ASEAN-U.S. Special Leaders' Summit, the U.S. announced two initiatives, namely the U.S.-ASEAN Connect and the U.S. Trade Workshop. The U.S.-ASEAN Connect Centres in Jakarta, Bangkok and Singapore have supported the U.S.' economic engagement in the region in connecting entrepreneurs, investors and businesses from both regions. Under this program, the U.S.-ASEAN Internship Programme was launched in 2018 to provide opportunities for ASEAN students to gain work experience in U.S. companies based in ASEAN Member States.
- The ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Roadshow to the U.S., which was started in 2013, has played an important role in creating partnership opportunities for ASEAN and U.S. businesses. During the Third AEM Roadshow on 17-18 February 2016, the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council (US-ABC) held a Conference to exchange views on the business opportunities.
- The US-ABC also had engagements with the ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, ASEAN Agriculture and Forestry Ministers, ASEAN Energy Ministers, ASEAN Transport Ministers, ASEAN Tourism Ministers, ASEAN Digital Ministers, and ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity.

- The ASEAN-U.S. Digital Work Plan 2023-2025 are currently being implemented to enhance cooperation on the goals and sectoral areas specified in the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 as well as an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure ICT ecosystem and other identified priorities, including 1) Digital and ICT Infrastructure; 2) Digital Data Policy and Regulation, and 3) Digital Connectivity and Inclusion.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between the ASEAN Center for Energy and USAID's Southeast Asia Smart Power Program (SPP) was signed at the sidelines of the 41<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials Meeting on Energy (SOME) in June 2023. The MoU aims to support the ASEAN Power Grid, as well as strengthening the region's power system by boosting regional energy trade and accelerating the deployment of clean energy technologies.

## **SOCIO-CULTURAL COOPERATION**

- ASEAN and the U.S. are working on a number of areas, including disaster management, promotion and protection of the rights of women and children, as well as education and youth.
- The U.S. continues to contribute towards human development in the region as well as in enhancing people-to-people connectivity through initiatives such as the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI); the Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Visiting Scholar; the U.S.-Science Prize for Women; as well as the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program and Connecting the Mekong through Education and Training (COMET), among others.
- The U.S. continues to support the advancement of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in the region, including support for the ASEAN Regional Study on WPS, which was launched on International Women's Day on 8 March 2021, and the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security, including the convening of the ASEAN WPS Summit: High-Level Dialogue to Advance the Implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in July 2023. The U.S. has also provided continuous support in realising gender equality through gender mainstreaming efforts across ASEAN Community pillars, including in the implementation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (AGMSF).
- The first ASEAN-U.S. Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change was held on 24 August 2023 and endorsed the ASEAN-U.S. Environment and Climate Work Plan. The Work Plan focuses on four areas of cooperation, namely (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 ASEAN – U.S. High-Level Dialogue on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was organised in parallel with the ASEAN High-Level Forum (AHLF) on Disability-Inclusive Development and Partnership Beyond 2025 Forum on 10 October 2023. The Dialogue reaffirmed the shared commitment of ASEAN and the U.S. in deepening the cooperation in promoting disability inclusion through the implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025, as echoed during the ASEAN-U.S. Special Summit, 2022 Joint Vision Statement.
- In addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN and the U.S. have stepped up their collaboration on this front through a series of high-level engagements and initiatives. This includes: (i) the U.S.' pledge of USD 500,000 towards the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, and its commitment to supporting the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF); (ii) the launch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Regional Office in Ha Noi, Viet Nam in August 2021; and (iii) the U.S.' pledge of over USD 194 million in COVID-19 related assistance to the region, as well as an ASEAN – U.S. Special Session Health Ministerial Meeting which was convened on 15 May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia.

## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

- The U.S. has provided support and assistance to ASEAN in the area of development cooperation, including through the Regional Development Cooperation Agreements which has been extended to 2029 to accommodate new programmes for 2024-2029 to cater to ASEAN's priorities and needs for the post-2025 period.
- Since September 2018, the U.S. through its *ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade and E-Commerce (IGNITE)*, *Partnership for Regional Optimization within the Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT)*, and *the ASEAN Policy Implementation (API)* have been supporting the realisation of goals under the three ASEAN Community Pillars, following the completion of the five-year *ASEAN-U.S. Partnership for Good Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Development and Security (PROGRESS)* and *the ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment (ACTI) programmes* in 2018. The IGNITE, PROSPECT and API programmes were recently completed, and will be succeeded by “the ASEAN-USAID Partnership Program”, in view of further strengthening ASEAN's capacity to advance economic growth, trade, good governance, resilience and stability within the region.
- The United States has supported ASEAN's efforts in narrowing development gap within and between ASEAN Member States through the implementation of the IAI Work Plan. It has also been providing support for sub-regional development through the Mekong-US Partnership (MUSP) in collaboration with other Dialogue Partners of ASEAN.

