

ASEAN-UK Joint Ministerial Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific: Advancing Together

WE the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), gathered on the occasion of the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference with the UK in Manila, 22 July 2026;

COMMEMORATING the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership and **NOTING** with satisfaction the significant achievements in advancing the partnership since its establishment in 2021;

EMPHASISING the importance of maintaining peace, stability and prosperity, and respect for independence, sovereignty, equality, and territorial integrity, as well as the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), **REINFORCING** multilateralism, an ASEAN-centred, open, inclusive, transparent, resilient and rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law, and our efforts to address common challenges;

REAFFIRMING our joint commitment to upholding international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the 1982 UNCLOS, the values and norms enshrined in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and **COMMEMORATING** the 50th anniversary of the TAC;

ACKNOWLEDGING the interlinkages between the security and prosperity of ASEAN and the UK, **RECOGNISING** that resilient and sustainable mutual growth is central to the ASEAN-UK partnership, that global and regional challenges are increasingly interconnected and multidimensional, and the growing necessity to uphold the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific's (AOIP) core principles;

REAFFIRMING the objectives and principles of the AOIP, which provide a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, while **UNDERSCORING** the importance of partnership between ASEAN and the UK, for the implementation of the AOIP and the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, and **WORKING TOGETHER** to undertake practical cooperation on the four priority areas identified in the AOIP through ASEAN-led mechanisms;

AFFIRMING our support for the objectives and principles of the AOIP in promoting ASEAN Centrality and unity, and **UNDERSCORING** that promotion and implementation of the AOIP will contribute to promoting an international system based on international law and a rules-based regional architecture in the Indo-Pacific that upholds international law, embraces key principles

such as ASEAN Centrality and unity, inclusiveness, and transparency, and complements the ASEAN Community-building process;

RECOGNISING that the AOIP, and the UK's approach to the Indo-Pacific as set out in the UK National Security Strategy (2025), share relevant fundamental principles in supporting an open, inclusive, transparent and rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law;

REAFFIRMING our joint commitment to strengthening the ASEAN-UK Dialogue Partnership with a view to reinforcing our mutual prosperity and security, as well as **REITERATING** the UK's support for the realisation of ASEAN Community-building visions, particularly through the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045; and

COMMENDING the ASEAN-UK Plan of Action (2027-2031) adopted at the ASEAN-UK Post-Ministerial Conference in 2026 and **WELCOMING** the UK's meaningful actions to enhance its Partnership with ASEAN and to play its full role as a Dialogue Partner, in support of ASEAN Centrality, including through its application for participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

DO HEREBY DECLARE TO:

SUPPORT the implementation of the AOIP and **ENHANCE** cooperation in its priority areas to maintain and enhance peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and reinforce multilateralism;

FULFILL the commitments outlined in the newly adopted ASEAN-UK Plan of Action (2027-2031), which will support the implementation of the AOIP and ASEAN Centrality, and **DEEPEN** cooperation to further the objectives of the AOIP and support a peaceful and secure region based on respect for a rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law;

SUPPORT the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, its four Strategic Plans and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan V (2026-2030), and the 2024 ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the AOIP for the Future-Ready ASEAN and ASEAN-Centred Regional Architecture;

EXPAND cooperation, in line with the AOIP, in addressing global challenges beyond the region to promote peace, stability and mutual prosperity, by capitalising on ASEAN's growing influence;

WELCOME the UK's application for participation in the ARF as an active Dialogue Partner with longstanding ties to the region and a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council; **CONSIDER** this a meaningful way to enhance ASEAN-UK relations and to foster constructive dialogue and cooperation in the region;

ENCOURAGE continued deliberations and consultations between ASEAN and the UK on the Protocol to the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty, as a key contribution to regional peace and security; and

COMMIT to undertake substantive, practical and tangible cooperation through meaningful and concrete projects under the AOIP's four priority areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, and economic and other possible areas of cooperation as outlined in the ASEAN-UK Plan of Action (2027-2031) through ASEAN-led mechanisms, detailed as below.

1. Maritime Cooperation

EMPHASISE our shared commitment to support peace, security, and stability in the region and **REAFFIRM** our strong commitment to upholding international law, in particular the 1982 UNCLOS;

UNDERLINE the importance of respect for the rule of law, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, maritime safety, security, and stability and the peaceful resolution of disputes, freedom of navigation and overflight, including safe, unimpeded, and continuous transit passage of vessels and aircraft in straits used for international navigation, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, as well as the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and **UNDERScore** the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight to the global economy and global trade for the benefit of all countries;

REITERATE support to ASEAN Centrality and unity in maintaining peace and stability in the regional maritime sphere, consistent with the principles stipulated in the AOIP as well as ASEAN's central role in developing and shaping institutions that strengthen the rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law and foster a strategic outlook that promotes economic and other forms of cooperation, respect for national sovereignty, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS;

PROMOTE maritime cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus Experts' Working Groups (ADMM-Plus EWGs), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS;

STRENGTHEN cooperation on maritime issues of mutual interest and importance, including on the implementation of relevant ASEAN frameworks on maritime cooperation and cooperation to address shared threats to maritime security and stability, and in areas such as search and rescue (SAR); Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR); migrant fishers

protection such as combating forced labour and human trafficking at sea, safety of navigation; communication at sea; maritime domain awareness; promoting deeper understanding of the 1982 UNCLOS; sustainable use and management of marine resources; and protection and conservation of marine environment, biodiversity, and ecosystems, through appropriate activities; and

REAFFIRM the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/248 which emphasises, in the Preamble, the universal and unified character of the 1982 UNCLOS, and which reaffirms 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.

2. Connectivity

SUPPORT the implementation of the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan (2026–2035), recognising connectivity as a driver of economic growth, resilience and regional stability;

FURTHER IMPLEMENT the commitments in the ASEAN-UK Joint Ministerial Statement on ‘Enhancing Connectivity for a Prosperous and Sustainable Future’ agreed at the Post-Ministerial Conference with the UK in 2024;

SUPPORT the conclusion of the negotiations for the ASEAN-UK Air Services Agreement in 2026 to support ASEAN-UK connectivity that would be beneficial for all parties, as well as a tangible way to boost people-to-people links and economic ties between the world’s largest aviation markets;

ACCELERATE regional interconnectivity including the promotion of cross-border power trade, through support to the ASEAN Power Grid, including via technical assistance for the development of subsea power cables and overland energy interconnections, and leveraging the UK's Green Transition Fund and the UK's funding through multilateral institutions to improve project investment readiness, and **SUPPORT** clean energy transition efforts in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action of Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2026-2030;

ENHANCE people-to-people connectivity including through UK scholarship schemes, and other education opportunities to facilitate greater student mobility and youth engagement, including the UK Chevening ASEAN Scholarship Scheme, TVET collaboration, teacher professional development, STEM initiatives and the ASEAN Future Forum Next Gen

Workshop, and **ENCOURAGE** the expansion of these programmes into other areas of shared priority;

STRENGTHEN cultural exchange and cooperation in arts, heritage, and the development of cultural and creative industries between ASEAN and the UK, to promote greater awareness, understanding and appreciation of each other's arts and cultures, and to deepen people-to-people ties;

ENHANCE cooperation on combating transnational crimes, including fraud and online scams, money laundering, illicit drugs, trafficking in persons, to ensure enhanced, digitally secure and physically safe infrastructure that is indispensable for promoting regional connectivity;

NOTE the scourge of online scams and that fraud is an increasingly transnational, sophisticated, and complex enterprise in an ever more connected world, run by serious transnational organised crime groups operating globally, and that no country can address this challenge alone, and **ENCOURAGE** continued cooperation on combating cyber-enabled fraud, including scam centres, as well as associated trafficking in persons and money laundering, through relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms;

LOOK FORWARD to the inaugural ASEAN Plus the UK Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC+UK) Consultation; and

RECOGNISE that threats to the integrity of the information environment, including misinformation and disinformation, present shared challenges to a more open, transparent, and inclusive Indo-Pacific and to partners beyond the region, and **COMMIT** to enhanced cooperation efforts to address these threats.

3. UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030

PROMOTE the complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Complementarities Initiatives 2.0);

REAFFIRM our mutual commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), recognising their centrality to resilient, inclusive and sustainable economic growth;

ADVANCE delivery of the SDGs through a partnership towards unlocking SDG financing and long-term investment, strengthening health and education systems, sharing expertise

between the UK and ASEAN, and supporting meaningful and inclusive participation of all stakeholders in SDG implementation;

WELCOME the positive outcome of the ‘ASEAN – UK Dialogue on Sustainability’ held on 23 February 2026 in Bangkok and **WORK TOWARDS** strengthening the UN Development System for a more coherent and effective delivery at regional, sub-regional and country levels; and

ENHANCE cooperation in line with the new ASEAN-UK Plan of Action (2027-2031), including with a focus on:

- Health (SDG3) and efforts to enhance pandemic preparedness and response by strengthening inclusive and resilient health systems with the ability to prevent, detect and respond to health threats including through implementation of the ASEAN One Health Joint Plan of Action through the ASEAN-UK Health Security Partnership Programme.
- Education (SDG4) and the promotion of gender equality (SDG5) and inclusive foundational learning for children in the region to improve lifelong learning outcomes.
- Clean energy (SDG 7) and climate action (SDG 13), which support climate policy, green and sustainable finance, clean energy, nature-based solutions and sustainable smart cities and transport and contribute to green economic growth, including through relevant ASEAN mechanisms such as the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change, and the ASEAN Centre for Energy.
- Economic growth (SDG 8), including through exchanging expertise and strengthening cooperation on regulatory reform, financial services and open trade to improve the business environment, boost economic activity and drive mutual prosperity.

4. Economic and Other possible areas of cooperation

RECALL the ASEAN-UK Joint Ministerial Declaration on Future Economic Cooperation agreed in September 2021 and **WELCOME** the commitment to agree to a new and updated Economic Work Plan in 2026 that reflects our shared priorities (including as expressed in the ASEAN Economic Community Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and the ASEAN Community Vision 2045) to support deeper economic integration in ASEAN, ensure economic resilience, and promote trade and investment between ASEAN and the UK;

EMPHASISE the importance of a predictable, open, free, non-discriminatory, transparent, fair, inclusive, sustainable, and rules-based multilateral trading system, with a reformed and revitalised WTO at its core, in promoting intraregional and ASEAN-UK trade and mutual prosperity;

ENHANCE cooperation on geoeconomic issues, recognising the impact of global uncertainties and supporting ASEAN's capacity to respond effectively through mutually beneficial partnerships; **WELCOME** the UK's support to ASEAN to enhance regional resilience to emerging geoeconomic challenges;

GROW mutual prosperity, including by enhancing private sector engagement and facilitating the sharing of experiences, expertise and best practices in key and fast-growing areas such as supply chain resilience, digital innovation, sustainable growth, and financial services;

ENHANCE cooperation in regulatory reform and trade facilitation by strengthening regulatory and standards systems, product safety and consumer protection, through targeted UK technical assistance, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building, and advance innovation through a Model Code of Conduct to Address IP Infringement of Online Platforms and MSME-focused Intellectual Property (IP) toolkits;

LOOK FORWARD TO the signature and encouraging collaboration leveraging ASEAN's Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) and supporting its implementation, including through capacity-building, technical assistance, public and private sector workshops and developing roadmaps to encourage the alignment with and application of relevant legislation, notably the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR);

PROMOTE deeper financial services connectivity between the UK and ASEAN to support open, resilient and sustainable growth across ASEAN, including collaboration on financial inclusion and literacy, sustainable finance, and harmonisation of regulation to applicable international standards;

PROMOTE institutional exchanges and capacity-building on customs digitalisation, through His Majesty's Revenue and Customs' exchanges with ASEAN Customs Officials;

ENHANCE cooperation on emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI) through platforms such as the ASEAN Working Group on AI Governance, in advancing capacity-building on mutually agreed terms, innovation partnerships, and supporting the development of

common AI standards for the responsible use of AI technologies, to ensure a secure, inclusive, and transparent digital ecosystem;

SUPPORT narrowing the development gap in ASEAN and advancing regional integration, including through implementation of the IAI Work Plan V (2026-2030) as well as sub-regional development cooperation and frameworks in the ASEAN region, aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN which would contribute to promoting sustainable and equitable development and inclusive growth across the ASEAN Community; and

ENCOURAGE opportunities for cooperation in line with the AOIP in other relevant areas of common interest, and **LOOK FORWARD** to building on the positive momentum of the partnership in the years ahead and advancing together.

ADOPTED in Manila, the Philippines on 22 July 2026.