



**CHAIR'S STATEMENT
OF THE 16TH EAST ASIA SUMMIT (EAS) FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

Manila, 23 July 2026

1. The 16th East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting was convened on 23 July 2026 in Manila, Philippines. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines.

Review and Future Direction of the EAS

2. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to further strengthening the EAS as the premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity in East Asia, in line with the EAS foundational documents and based on the established principles, objectives and modalities of the EAS.

3. The Meeting reaffirmed that the EAS would continue to be an open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking forum that is an integral component of the evolving ASEAN-centred, rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law, including the Charter of the United Nations (UN), the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), as well as the purposes and principles reflected in the 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit, the 2011 EAS Declaration on the Principles of Mutually Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles), the 2025 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the EAS, and reaffirmed in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

4. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN Centrality in the EAS and the ASEAN-led mechanisms in addressing challenges to regional security, sustainable development, and economic growth. The Meeting underscored ASEAN's central role in the EAS and commitment to work in close partnership with all EAS participating countries, consistent with the principles of the AOIP. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's integral role as the region's leading convener for strategic dialogue and underscored its commitment to deepen cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms and other relevant regional and multilateral institutions. The Meeting emphasised the important role of the EAS in strengthening multilateralism and a rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law, and further underscored the need to promote an enabling environment for peace, stability, economic growth, and sustainable development for all, through dialogue, consultation and cooperation and by enhancing mutual trust and confidence, and respect for international law.

5. The Meeting underscored the need to ensure the EAS' continued relevance and effectiveness in responding to challenges amidst the rapidly evolving regional and global architecture. The Meeting noted the value of practical cooperation, including through ASEAN-led mechanisms, to support the implementation of the AOIP through tangible projects under its four priority areas, to reinforce strategic trust, and to address common challenges based on mutual trust, benefit, and respect. The Meeting further underscored the importance of ensuring transparent, predictable and responsible behaviour in accordance with the principles and norms of the relevant ASEAN instruments. The Meeting emphasised its commitment to a region where sovereignty and territorial integrity are fully respected and where differences are managed through dialogue and diplomacy in accordance with international law.

6. The Meeting recognised the continued efforts to strengthen EAS work processes, to ensure the effective follow-up and implementation of the Leaders' decisions and initiatives in a timely manner, as well as to promote coherence with other ASEAN-led mechanisms which are mutually reinforcing, through fostering complementarity among the mechanisms and avoiding duplication of work, and enhancing coordination and cooperation with the support of the EAS Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat.

Areas of Cooperation

7. The Meeting noted the progress made under the EAS Plan of Action (2024-2028), including in workstreams such as Peace and Security, Sustainable Development; Climate, Environment and Energy Cooperation; Education Cooperation; Finance; Health, Including Pandemic Diseases; Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance; ASEAN Connectivity; Economic Cooperation and Trade; Poverty Alleviation; Food Security; Maritime Cooperation; Tourism Cooperation; and Advancement and Empowerment of Women and Youth Participation.

8. The Meeting affirmed the importance of the areas of cooperation of the AOIP with a view to exploring further cooperation through relevant mechanisms, centres and institutions, while upholding ASEAN Centrality and unity. The Meeting highlighted that the Plan of Action serves as the principal guide to enhance EAS cooperation and mainstreaming of the AOIP over the next few years, with the aim of enhancing the relevance, coherence, responsiveness, and effectiveness of the EAS.

9. The Meeting expressed its commitment to support ASEAN Community-building by cooperating with ASEAN on concrete projects under the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and through ASEAN-led mechanisms to realise the strategic objectives and vision of the ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future towards achieving a resilient, innovative, dynamic and people-centred ASEAN. The Meeting emphasised that future EAS cooperation should align with the strategic goals and objectives outlined in the ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future.

Peace and Security

10. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, as reflected in the adoption of key regional frameworks by ASEAN, including the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS, the convening of consultative platforms, and the establishment of mechanisms to advance WPS that involve EAS participating countries. The Meeting recalled the adoption of the EAS Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security in 2020 and called for EAS participating countries to undertake more practical activities to implement the Leaders' commitments.

11. The Meeting emphasised the growing importance of security in the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and reaffirmed the need to enhance cooperation to promote an open, safe, secure, stable, accessible, peaceful, and interoperable ICT environment, including through capacity building measures and countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes in accordance with UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution A/RES/79/243 on United Nations Convention against Cybercrime. In this connection, the Meeting encouraged the EAS participating countries to further enhance cooperation in this area based on the guidance provided by the 2015 EAS Leaders' Statement on Issues Related to Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies and the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Deepening Cooperation in the Security of Information and Communications Technologies and of the Digital Economy.

12. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to address the evolving threat of transnational crime, including cybercrime, ICT-enabled fraud, and online scams, which have increasingly harmed regional security and economic prosperity as well as the well-being of its peoples. The Meeting expressed concern that these crimes are often associated with trafficking in persons (TIP), illicit drug trafficking, and money laundering. The Meeting further acknowledged the increased use of new and emerging technologies by online scam networks including artificial intelligence, digital financial platforms, and cryptocurrency, including ICT-enabled fraud targeting women and girls across the region. The Meeting emphasised the importance of safeguarding border security, preventing corruption, and countering cybercrime in line with international law and related domestic laws of the respective EAS participating countries, while reaffirming the shared determination to combat transnational crime and ensure a safe, secure, and prosperous region through practical cooperation. The Meeting acknowledged the need for comprehensive, whole-of-society and multi-stakeholder responses involving states and their respective national institutions, the private sector, civil society, local communities, youth and media, and other relevant parties, and reaffirmed support for the implementation of regional and international frameworks, including the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2026-2035), the ASEAN Plan of Action on Cooperation on Immigration and Consular Assistance Matters (2022-2031), the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the 2024 United Nations Convention Against Cybercrime.

13. The Meeting emphasised the importance of further strengthening coordination among EAS participating countries through ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and its subsidiary mechanisms, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), ASEAN

Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD), ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting (ADGMIN), ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

Sustainable Development

14. The Meeting noted several initiatives relevant to sustainable development that are being led by Thailand as the ASEAN Coordinator for Sustainable Development Cooperation with the involvement of different key stakeholders, including EAS participating countries. A key initiative is the Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 (ACV 2045) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A GREEN Agenda for a green ASEAN (Complementarities Initiative 2.0), which aims to ensure continued alignment with the ACV 2045 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Meeting also welcomed the streamlining of several key ASEAN initiatives into one platform including the ASEAN Forum on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with National Development Planning Agencies, the South-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals, the AOIP Forum on Sustainable Development, and the ASEAN Networking Symposium on Sustainable Development.

15. The Meeting took note of the progress made in accelerating the implementation of sustainability initiatives, through steadfast and robust delivery of the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality, and the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework. The Meeting further noted key initiatives supported by a number of EAS Participating Countries, including the ASEAN Blue Economy Implementation Plan (2026-2030) and its upcoming accompanying Roadmap, the ASEAN Blue Carbon and Finance Profiling (ABCF) Project, and the feasibility study on the ASEAN Green Economy Framework Agreement (GEFA). The Meeting looked forward to the continued support of EAS Participating Countries in advancing ASEAN's priorities on sustainable, inclusive, and resilient growth.

Climate, Environment and Energy Cooperation

16. The Meeting expressed deep concern over the potential escalation of impacts of El Niño, which could be intensified by climate change and its consequences for the region's people, ecosystems, and development trajectory particularly through prolonged droughts, impacts on agricultural productivity and food security, heat stress and land/forest fires. The Meeting committed to deepen cooperation to mitigate these risks and transboundary impacts to protect public health and minimise economic repercussions, and underscore the urgent need for early warning systems, coordinated regional preparedness, strengthened disaster risk reduction, and resilience-building measures to safeguard the well-being of the region's peoples and the long-term sustainability of the region's development.

17. The Meeting discussed the importance of a sustainable recovery that supports economic growth, climate and sustainability goals, as well as the efforts by EAS participating countries to implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. The Meeting discussed

ways and means to address climate change and other environmental issues, including through the adoption of nature-based solutions, technology-based or scientific solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, sharing of best practices, technology transfer and providing resources and technical expertise for regional initiatives, including the operationalisation of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change and the development and implementation of the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP). The Meeting encouraged EAS participating countries to cooperate with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) to support the implementation of the ASEAN Biodiversity Plan launched in October 2024.

18. The Meeting took note of the progress made under the EAS Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Recovery, which was adopted at the 16th EAS in October 2021, including the importance of a sustainable recovery that is comprehensive, inclusive and resilient, and the need to promote economic policies and growth including trade and investment, that contribute to sustainable development and addressing climate change, as well as addressing other economic, social, and environmental challenges. The Meeting encouraged regional dialogue and cooperation in driving greater adoption of environmental social governance and sustainability reporting as part of the sustainable recovery efforts, with the aim of enhancing market access, strengthening investment attractiveness, and building economic resilience across the EAS economies.

19. The Meeting encouraged EAS participating countries to strengthen cooperation on addressing air pollution, particularly in relation to climate change, sustainable cities, marine pollution, biodiversity conservation, and a One-Health approach-related to environmental health matters. The Meeting emphasised the need to address transboundary haze pollution and also encouraged EAS participating countries to explore collaboration for the establishment and operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution (ACC THPC) to fully and effectively implement the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) and the Second Roadmap for ASEAN Cooperation on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (Second ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap) 2023-2030. The work of the ACC THPC, ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), and ASEAN Research and Training Centre for Space Technology and Applications (ARTSA), under the Establishment Agreement of the ACC THPC, will facilitate the effective implementation of the AATHP and further reaffirm ASEAN's commitment in enhancing regional cooperation and coordination on transboundary haze pollution in the ASEAN region.

20. The Meeting welcomed the outcome of the 19th EAS Energy Ministers' Meeting (EMM) on 17 October 2025 that acknowledged the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2026-2030 overall theme of "Advancing Regional Cooperation in Ensuring Energy Security and Accelerating Decarbonisation for a Just and Inclusive Energy Transition". The Meeting welcomed the enhanced contributions from EAS participating countries to advance ASEAN's aspirational energy targets for 2030. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of modernising and expanding electricity infrastructure such as transmission capacity and regional power

grids to strengthen energy security. The Meeting recognised that enhancing grid infrastructure including through energy storage systems that respond to the demands of emerging technology, microgrids, smart grids, and submarine power cables as well as deepening regional interconnectivity can foster more efficient and reliable grids. The Meeting also reaffirmed the importance of advancing critical and emerging energy technologies in support of APAEC 2026-2030, such as Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS), energy storage, and smart grids. The Meeting highlighted the importance of diversifying supply chains, promoting voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, mobilising finance, ensuring energy security, and advancing affordable, reliable, accessible, and sustainable energy systems.

21. The Meeting highlighted the urgent need for regional collaboration to ensure energy security, advance energy interconnectivity, promote access to affordable and reliable energy, advance green and low-carbon transitions and address climate change amid growing energy demand affecting the region's energy challenges. The EAS participating countries welcomed ASEAN's decision to realise the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) by 2045 and reaffirmed their commitment to support ASEAN's efforts in advancing a secure, resilient, and interconnected regional energy future, in line with the EAS Plan of Action workstream on energy cooperation. The Meeting welcomed the signing of the enhanced APG Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and took note of the endorsement of the Submarine Power Cable Development Framework Terms of Reference (ToR). The Meeting welcomed the convening of the 7th EAS Clean Energy Forum and the 11th EAS New Energy Forum held in November 2025 in Fuzhou, China, and looked forward to the 12th EAS New Energy Forum that will be in 2026. The Meeting encouraged collaboration on critical minerals value chains and just transition financing, the development of energy-optimising smart cities, raising public awareness on energy usage, and fostering sustainable lifestyles aiming to build an affordable, reliable, clean, resilient, and low-carbon energy future through shared regional goals and international cooperation. The Meeting took note of activities under the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) and Partnership On Wide Energy and Resources Resilience Asia (POWERR Asia) platforms that contribute to APAEC and accelerates energy transitions in the region through various pathways.

Education Cooperation

22. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of advancing long-term and mutually beneficial education cooperation among the EAS participating countries, particularly through youth and people-to-people exchanges, scholarship programmes, inclusive and accessible life-long learning, skills development, and digital literacy. The Meeting recognised that EAS education cooperation has been pursued in line with the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025 and looked forward to further cooperation following the launch of the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2026-2030 in July 2026. The Meeting commended initiatives to advance inclusive and quality education, particularly in Early Childhood Care and Education, basic education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), higher education, research, collaboration, people-to-people exchanges, scholarship programmes, teacher ICT competency, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), students' mental health and well-being, and effective policy and governance. The Meeting

further supported the priorities of the ASEAN TVET Council (ATC) in advancing responsive, inclusive and future-ready TVET systems through the implementation of its Work Plan 2021-2030.

23. The Meeting called for greater efforts to explore more initiatives for cooperation between ASEAN and the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries in sports, culture, and arts, drawing on the rich cultural diversity and heritage of ASEAN as an engine for economic growth and sustainable development, and forging closer friendship and understanding between ASEAN and the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries.

Finance

24. The Meeting reiterated the need to work together to strengthen the global economic recovery. The Meeting encouraged further strengthening of regional financial cooperation to not only foster regional economic and financial stability but also to reinforce long-term resilience while maintaining flexibility to address evolving near-term challenges. The Meeting also encouraged EAS participating countries to continue strengthening crisis preparedness, deepening policy dialogue on payment connectivity, and identifying digital financial crisis risks within the regional banking and payment sectors in addressing shared challenges and heightened uncertainties

Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases

25. The Meeting recognised the importance of mental health as a critical public health issue which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and called for greater cooperation in this area. The Meeting welcomed the development of the EAS Joint Action Plan on Mental Health Cooperation that will provide a framework for practical mental health collaboration within the EAS, as part of the implementation efforts of the EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation, adopted at the 16th East Asia Summit in October 2021.

Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance

26. The Meeting reiterated its commitment to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2026-2030. The Meeting encouraged EAS participating countries to forge stronger collaboration to support ASEAN towards becoming a global leader in disaster management, including strengthening climate and disaster resilience for sustainable development, in line with the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Sustainable Resilience. The Meeting also reaffirmed support to enhance the implementation of the "ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region" to increase the speed, scale, and solidarity of ASEAN's response, and strengthen the capacity, operational readiness, and sustainability of the AHA Centre to provide timely, effective, and coordinated support in realising ASEAN's collective response to disaster.

27. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of promoting localisation in anticipatory action for disaster preparedness and response, recognising that local actors and communities play a central role in reducing disaster risks, mitigating the impacts of disasters, enhancing resilience, and strengthening regional cooperation and mechanisms. The Meeting looked forward to fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships among EAS participating countries to build capacities and mobilise resources to support localisation efforts, including through locally led and community-based approaches, in line with the EAS Statement on Promoting Localisation in Anticipatory Action for Disaster Preparedness and Response.

28. The Meeting underscored the importance of further strengthening engagement between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) of non-ASEAN EAS participating countries, including through active participation in ASEAN-led initiatives and practical cooperation. The Meeting encouraged EAS participating countries to continue advancing cooperation in disaster management, including through the effective implementation of the 2009 Cha-am Hua Hin Statement on EAS Disaster Management and the 2014 EAS Statement on Rapid Disaster Response, and the 2025 EAS Statement on Promoting Localisation in Anticipatory Action for Disaster Preparedness and Response, while upholding ASEAN Centrality.

29. The Meeting welcomed the convening of the Roundtable Discussion and Scenario Exercise on Implementing the 2025 EAS' Leaders' Statement on Promoting Localisation in Anticipatory Action for Disaster Preparedness and Response by the Philippines and Australia on 10 July 2026 in Bandung, Indonesia. The activity, attended by the EAS Ambassadors' Group and experts from EAS participating countries, was a platform for translating the Statement into practical and actionable pathways, including by sharing best practices, experiences, expertise and resources, as well as capacity building initiatives, identifying opportunities for enhanced regional cooperation, examining key gaps, and enabling factors in advancing localisation in anticipatory action.

Cooperation on ASEAN Connectivity

30. The Meeting welcomed the support and cooperation from non-ASEAN EAS participating countries, such as in the areas of sustainable urbanisation, data-driven smart city planning, innovative financing, and transit-oriented development, to implement the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan (ACSP) as the successor document to the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. The Meeting looked forward to deepening cooperation in the implementation of the ACSP through tangible initiatives, programmes, and projects in the strategic areas of Sustainable Infrastructure, Smart and Sustainable Urban Development, Digital Innovation, Seamless Logistics and Supply Chain, Regulatory Excellence and Cooperation, as well as People-to-People Connectivity, to enhance regional connectivity and to advance the ASEAN Connectivity agenda in support of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

31. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of enhancing synergies among various connectivity initiatives within and beyond the region and reiterated the significance of sustaining meaningful engagement and dialogue between the ASEAN

Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries, to enhance ASEAN Connectivity cooperation, through various ASEAN-led connectivity platforms, including the ACCC Consultation with Dialogue Partners and Other External Partners on Connectivity, as well as the High-Level Conference on ASEAN Connectivity to be held in August 2026 in the Philippines. The said Meeting reaffirmed the importance of ASCN in fostering collaboration among ASEAN cities and dialogue partners, consistent with the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Smart Cities, which recognized the potential benefits of developing a regional smart cities ecosystem to strengthen the region's capacity to harness the opportunities associated with the digital and Fourth Industrial Revolution and achieve wide-ranging economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Economic Cooperation and Trade

32. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the open, non-discriminatory, predictable, transparent, fair, inclusive, sustainable, and rules-based multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core. The Meeting acknowledged that the WTO continues to face significant challenges, and that meaningful, necessary and comprehensive reform is essential to improve its functions so that it is better equipped to respond to the evolving needs and interests of all Members. The Meeting expressed concerns over the rising global trade tensions increasing uncertainties in the international economic landscape. In this regard, the Meeting emphasized the importance of strengthening regional economic cooperation among the EAS participating countries with ASEAN playing a central role, to navigate global economic challenges by engaging in constructive dialogue, open communication, and collaboration. The Meeting also acknowledged the need to foster cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as digitalisation, green economy, and supply chain resilience and connectivity, to ensure resilience against future economic shocks and narrow the development gap in the region. The Meeting underscored the importance of promoting circular economy approaches to unlock future growth in a more sustainable way and support transitions to sustainable growth in the region.

33. The Meeting welcomed the convening of the 13th EAS Economic Ministers' Meeting held in September 2025, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the Ministers exchanged views on regional and global economic challenges, including those likely to impact supply chain resilience such as climate change, food and energy security. The Meeting reaffirmed our commitment to further enhance economic integration and cooperation, particularly in the areas of digital economy and economic participation of all communities. The Meeting looked forward to the 14th EAS EMM scheduled for September 2026 in the Philippines.

34. The Meeting underscored the critical role of digital transformation in driving future economic growth, resilience, and competitiveness for all EAS participating countries. In this regard, the Meeting commended the successful conclusion of the negotiations of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), as an initiative towards digitally integrated, secure, interoperable, competitive, and inclusive regional economy, and looked forward to its signing in November 2026 during the 49th ASEAN Summit. The Meeting recognised that an ambitious, comprehensive, and forward-looking ASEAN DEFA will not only deepen digital

integration among ASEAN Member States but also create opportunities for enhanced interoperability, cross-border data flows and digital trade, and innovation-driven partnerships with non-ASEAN EAS participating countries to ensure the region collectively benefits from the full potential of the digital economy. The Meeting supported micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) digitalisation, AI development, innovation and growth, as well as noting the importance of AI safety and governance, literacy, and digital skills partnerships to ensure no one is left behind.

35. The Meeting emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration on emerging technologies such as AI, secure digital infrastructure, trusted data flows and cybersecurity, including through the implementation of the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Deepening Cooperation in the Security of Information and Communications Technologies and of the Digital Economy and active participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms, activities, and joint initiatives. The Meeting encouraged continued engagement between ASEAN and non-ASEAN EAS participating countries to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are widely shared, while upholding the principles of ASEAN Centrality and an open, secure, stable, accessible, peaceful, interoperable and inclusive digital future.

Poverty Alleviation

36. The Meeting recognised the strategic importance of advancing rural transformative agenda and poverty eradication strategy in ASEAN, and commended the work of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) in strengthening cooperation which aims to eradicate poverty through, among others, the operationalisation of the ASEAN Master Plan on Rural Development (2022 – 2026), the development of the SOMRDPE Work Plan 2026-2030, the annual convening of the ASEAN Public-Private-People Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, and the ASEAN Villages Network (AVN) that continue to facilitate meaningful dialogue and partnership between ASEAN and its key stakeholders, including the EAS participating countries, towards the implementation of the 2017 EAS Leaders' Statement on Cooperation in Poverty Alleviation to enhance closer relations and cooperation on shared rural and poverty eradication priorities.

37. The Meeting recognised the importance of advancing social protection agenda in the EAS and beyond as a basic human right. The Meeting further recognised that for social protection to have greater impact on the lives of the people, it must be inclusive, sustainable, future-proof and adaptive to different risks and vulnerabilities brought about by changes in the economy and labour markets and the impacts of climate change, disasters, ageing-related challenges, and economic crises across the EAS participating countries. In this regard, cross-sectoral cooperation, particularly from social welfare, health, labour, finance, food, agriculture, disasters, energy, and environment sectors, is crucial. Likewise, the meaningful engagement of the private sector, development partners, civil society, service providers, and community volunteers is important.

38. The Meeting welcomed opportunities for cooperation on strengthening social protection systems, especially those that address the needs of the most vulnerable

groups through building evidence, knowledge exchange and sharing of good practices in support of the implementation of the Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, the ASEAN Guidelines on Alternatives to Detention for Children, and the ASEAN Guidelines on Disaster Responsive Social Protection.

Food Security

39. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to continue implementing the 2013 EAS Declaration on Food Security and stressed the need to further enhance food and nutrition security including access to safe, nutritious, and healthy diets for all, through supporting the implementation of the Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Sectoral Plan for 2026-2030. The Meeting expressed support for the implementation of the Action Plan for Sustainable Agriculture in ASEAN and the 2023 ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises to take practical and concrete measures in strengthening local, regional and global food supply chains and logistics systems to ensure regional and global food security and nutrition and improving resilience against climate change. The Meeting supported cooperation on resilient regional rice and staple food supply.

Maritime Cooperation

40. The Meeting expressed support for the strengthening of maritime cooperation among the EAS participating countries to respond to maritime challenges, maintain maritime safety and security, uphold freedom of navigation in and overflight above straits used for international navigation, and promote the sustainable development of the seas and oceans, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Meeting also encouraged maritime cooperation as reflected in the 2015 EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation, the 2020 EAS Leaders' Statement on Marine Sustainability, the 2011 Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles), and the 2023 EAS Leaders' Statement on Maintaining and Promoting the Region as an Epicentrum of Growth, through a collective and comprehensive approach, and emphasised the need to enhance complementarity with other ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ARF, ADMM-Plus, and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).

41. The Meeting recognised the importance of maintaining and further strengthening stability in the maritime domain in our region and underlined the importance of the peaceful resolution of disputes, upholding freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea, including the right of transit passage in straits used for international navigation, and strengthening maritime cooperation and exploring mutually beneficial initiatives in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. The Meeting looked forward to the publication of the second edition of the ASEAN Maritime Outlook, which serves as a practical reference in understanding maritime trends and challenges and promoting maritime cooperation in the region. The Meeting took into account the cross-cutting nature of maritime cooperation through activities such as the AOIP Seminar Series on Submarine Cables, which was organised and co-hosted by Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, Japan, and the ROK in February 2025 in Jakarta. The Meeting noted the past editions of the EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation that have

been each hosted by India, Indonesia and Australia in cooperation with EAS participating countries and looked forward to the organisation of its 7th edition. The Meeting also noted that India will organise the EAS Maritime Heritage Festival in Gujarat, India. The Meeting also welcomed the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Maritime Cooperation adopted on 08 May 2026 during the 48th ASEAN Summit in Cebu, Philippines, which aims to strengthen maritime cooperation, including through concrete initiatives, such as the formalization of the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF) as an ASEAN Sectoral Body under Annex I of the ASEAN Charter and the planned establishment of an ASEAN Maritime Centre in the Philippines.

Tourism Cooperation

42. The Meeting recognised tourism as a key driver of economic growth, employment, social benefits and livelihoods of local communities and commended the continued efforts of the ASEAN National Tourism Organisation (NTOs) in implementing timely and innovative measures as guided by the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism and the ASEAN Tourism Sectoral Plan 2026-2030. In this regard, the Meeting encouraged EAS participating countries to implement the EAS Leaders' Statement on Economic Growth through Tourism Recovery which was adopted at the 16th EAS in 2021, through a dialogue on tourism among relevant agencies of the EAS participating countries and the existing ASEAN tourism mechanisms with the Plus Ones and Plus Three countries in line with the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism. The Meeting further encouraged the EAS participating countries to support the implementation of the Action Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Development in ASEAN, endorsed in 2024, which aims to guide ASEAN and relevant stakeholders in promoting sustainable tourism practices, strengthening regional collaboration, and enhancing ASEAN's position as a competitive and sustainable tourism destination.

43. The Meeting recognised the work of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), as well as the Senior Officials Meeting on Culture and Arts (SOMCA) and its dialogue partners in promoting awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of ASEAN. The Meeting acknowledged culture and arts as concepts that encompass ways of life, traditions and beliefs manifested through tangible and intangible cultural heritage, creative industries, and cultural tourism, that have an invaluable contribution toward promoting social, economic, human and sustainable development of EAS participating countries. The Meeting also acknowledged diversity and the right to enjoy and benefit from culture, and that the EAS participating countries can utilise culture as a key to strengthen regional cooperation, through cultural fora, cultural heritage protection and museum cooperation, and cooperation in cultural and creative industries and creative economy.

Advancement and Empowerment of Women and Youth Participation

44. The Meeting expressed support for strengthening cooperation towards the advancement and empowerment of women, persons with disabilities, older persons and youth participation in the region, through the ambit of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Youth (SOMY), and the Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD).

45. The Meeting emphasised the importance of promoting regional cooperation in articulating and advocating for women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship as key drivers of inclusive and sustainable growth in the region. The Meeting highlighted the indispensable contribution of care work to sustainable development, social cohesion, and crucially, gender equality and women's empowerment, which is increasingly shaping the cooperation and dialogue between ASEAN and the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries. In this regard, the Meeting underscored the need to advance the care economy agenda in the region, encompassing both paid and unpaid care work across formal and informal settings, in addressing persistent gender gaps, supporting carers and care recipients, and fostering more resilient and equitable economies across ASEAN in line with the operationalisation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience towards the ASEAN Community Post-2025.

46. The Meeting commended the initiative of the SOMSWD and ACWC in safeguarding the rights of children in the digital space through convening the annual ASEAN ICT Forum on Child Online Protection with wider participation of the private sector from the IT and communication industries. The Meeting expressed support to further accelerate the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse (ASEAN RPA on COEA) through collaboration on the common agenda, including knowledge exchange and shared advocacy on child protection online, with particular attention to children in vulnerable situations including children with disabilities, and to safe, accessible and inclusive digital environments, consistent with the best interests of the child.

47. The Meeting emphasised the importance of preventing and eliminating the worst forms of child labour guided by the ASEAN Roadmap for the Prevention of Child Labour Including the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2035. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Prevention of Child Labour, Including the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour during the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits spearheaded by the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) in close collaboration with the ACWC. We also welcomed the finalisation and adoption of the Post-2025 ASEAN Roadmap of the Prevention of Child Labour including the Elimination of its Worst Forms by the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) this year. The Meeting was pleased to note the ongoing work towards the completion of the Checklist on ASEAN Member State Governments, Labour Recruiters and Employers of Migrant Workers on Fair Recruitment and Decent Work Employment Practices, including safeguards for children, following its adoption by the ALMM.

48. The Meeting expressed commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, disability rights, and social inclusion through robust joint efforts in implementing the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (AGMSF), the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Regional Plan of Action on Implementing the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN across the

three ASEAN Community pillars, as gender, disability inclusion, ageing, and social inclusion rights are integral to ongoing and future collaborative initiatives.

49. The Meeting noted the convening of the ASEAN Foundation Model ASEAN Meeting (AFMAM) – East Asia Summit 2025 from 15-19 September at the ASEAN Headquarters/Secretariat in Jakarta, organised by the ASEAN Foundation in collaboration with Australia, China and Japan, participated by 59 university students from across EPCs.

Regional and International Issues

Situation in the South China Sea

50. The Meeting 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 pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. The Meeting emphasised the importance of 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). The Meeting looked forward to continued efforts in endeavouring to conclude the negotiation of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) that is in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS, within this year.

51. The Meeting 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, prosperity, and sustainable development. The Meeting welcomed practical measures that could reduce tensions and the risk of accidents, misunderstandings and miscalculation, and stressed the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures to enhance, among others, trust and confidence amongst parties, and reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

Developments in Myanmar

52. The Meeting expressed its deep concern over the ongoing conflicts and humanitarian situation in Myanmar, and encouraged progress on the implementation of the ASEAN Leaders' Five-Point Consensus (5PC). The Meeting reaffirmed its united position that the 5PC remains as ASEAN's main reference to address the political crisis in Myanmar and further reaffirmed the relevant Leaders' decisions. The Meeting denounced the continued acts of violence against civilians and public facilities and urged all parties involved to take concrete action to immediately halt indiscriminate violence, exercise utmost restraint, ensure the protection and safety of all civilians and civilian infrastructures, and create a conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people in need in Myanmar without discrimination, and inclusive national dialogue. The Meeting also welcomed the continued progress in the provision of humanitarian assistance to Myanmar by the AHA Centre in support of Point 4 of the ASEAN Leaders' 5PC. The Meeting noted

with appreciation the contributions by ASEAN Member States, external partners, the United Nations (UN), the private sector and the continued support from all stakeholders in Myanmar that have enabled the AHA Centre to ensure an effective response. The Meeting noted with appreciation the continued support from the international community for ASEAN in the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus.

53. The Meeting commended the dedicated efforts of H.E. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, since her appointment in January 2026. In carrying out her mandate, the Special Envoy has actively engaged a wide and diverse range of Myanmar stakeholders. The Special Envoy has also engaged ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, Myanmar neighbouring countries, international and regional partners, civil society organisations, humanitarian actors, and think tanks towards finding an inclusive and sustainable resolution to the crisis. This inclusive engagement reflects ASEAN's commitment to collaborative efforts in addressing the complex challenges in Myanmar.

Developments in the Korean Peninsula

54. The Meeting expressed concern over the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula and stressed the importance of resuming peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. The Meeting called for the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions, and noted international efforts to realize peaceful coexistence in the Korean Peninsula and to bring about its complete denuclearisation in a peaceful manner. Further, the Meeting also called for the immediate resolution of outstanding issues, including abductions. Diplomatic efforts, including the creation of a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties should remain a priority. The Meeting reiterated its readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms, in promoting a conducive atmosphere for peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.

Situation in Ukraine

55. With regard to Ukraine, as for all nations, the Meeting continued to reaffirm its respect for sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity. The Meeting reiterated our call for compliance with international law, including the UN Charter. The Meeting underlined the importance of an immediate cessation of hostilities and the serious engagement in an inclusive dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Meeting also called for the facilitation of rapid, safe, and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those in need, and for the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel, and persons in vulnerable situations.

Situation in the Middle East

56. The Meeting expressed serious concern over the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East, which poses a grave threat to the lives and safety of civilians, as well as to regional and global peace and stability. The Meeting noted the ongoing

initiatives, both at the regional and national levels, to promote measures to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of external shocks, and to support access to healthcare, and basic services for our people, particularly people in vulnerable situations, through appropriate, timely and targeted responses. The Meeting acknowledged the further implications of the continued tensions in the Middle East on regional trade, energy, and food security, including energy markets and supply chains, agricultural production, and the stability of agricultural input supply chains, particularly fertilizers. The Meeting reaffirmed the obligations of all States to resolve their differences through peaceful means, and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in armed conflicts, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, the UN Charter, and relevant UNSC resolutions.

57. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of maintaining maritime safety and security, and upholding freedom of navigation in and overflight above straits used for international navigation, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, and the relevant standards and recommended practices by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In this regard, the Meeting called for the restoration of the safe, unimpeded, and continuous transit passage of vessels and aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as for all parties to ensure the safety of seafarers and ships in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

58. The Meeting welcomed the signing by the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 18 June 2026. The Meeting expressed deep concern about the recent developments and called upon parties to exercise restraint and to return to the path of diplomacy to achieve a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict. The Meeting reaffirmed its support for diplomatic efforts in bringing lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East and commended the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, State of Qatar and all other parties involved for the collaborative efforts in this regard.

59. The Meeting also expressed grave concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has been exacerbated following the 7 October 2023 attacks and the resumption of hostilities on 18 March 2025, and condemned all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure. The Meeting reaffirmed its longstanding support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the rights to self-determination, and to their homeland. In this regard, the Meeting urged all parties concerned to work towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict with a view to realising a two-State solution in accordance with international law and the relevant UNSC and UNGA resolutions, including UNGA resolution A/RES/ES-10/23 on the Admission of New Members to the UN dated 10 May 2024, and UNGA resolution A/RES/ES-10/27 on protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations dated 12 June 2025.

60. The Meeting acknowledged the immediate and long-term effects of the Middle East crisis on the well-being of our people and noted the ongoing initiatives, both at the regional and national levels, to ensure the timely and targeted delivery of social welfare and social protection services to address the disproportionate impact of the crises, including on health and livelihoods.

Other matters

61. The Meeting noted the proposed outcome documents of the 21st EAS: EAS Declaration on Navigating Our Future, Together: Stability and Renewal; and the EAS Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Cooperation Against Cyber-enabled Fraud and Related Offenses. The Meeting also noted with appreciation the work of the Group of the EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta towards finalising these statements.

62. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the upcoming 21st EAS to be held on 15 November 2026 in Manila.

63. The Meeting looked forward to the convening of the 17th EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Singapore in 2027.

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