

ASEAN-AUSTRALIA JOINT FOREIGN MINISTERS' STATEMENT ON THE TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (TAC)

WE, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia, gathered on the occasion of the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) with Australia on 22 July 2026 in Manila, the Philippines;

REAFFIRMING our shared commitment to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous region, and reinforcing an open, transparent, resilient, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law, with ASEAN at its centre;

RECALLING Australia's accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 2005 and its long-standing support for ASEAN Centrality, the ASEAN-led regional architecture, the ASEAN Charter, and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), as ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner and Comprehensive Strategic Partner;

RECALLING that the purpose of the TAC is to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation in Southeast Asia, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter;

RECOGNISING that the TAC establishes fundamental principles to govern relations between High Contracting Parties (HCPs), including mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations; the right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion; non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; renunciation of the threat or use of force; and effective cooperation among Parties;

RECOGNISING also that the TAC promotes and serves as a vital framework for close and mutually beneficial cooperation between States to strengthen economic growth and support a peaceful and prosperous region;

EMPHASISING that peace and stability in our region are our collective responsibility, and that these principles are as important today as at the time of the TAC's adoption in 1976, and serve as a cornerstone of regional peace and stability as well as a foundational code of conduct for inter-state relations in the region;

RECOGNISING that adherence to the TAC creates an enabling environment for peace through norms on the prevention of conflict, management of disputes, and promotion of trust and confidence among States;

APPRECIATING the growing relevance and enduring appeal of the Treaty, as reflected in its expansion to an increasing number of HCPs over the past five decades, underscoring its role as a foundation for peaceful relations, mutual respect, and cooperation in the region and beyond;

RECALLING our commitment in the ASEAN-Australia Joint Leaders' Statement on Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management in the ASEAN-led Regional Architecture to strengthen cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms to promote open communication and dialogue, enhance mutual understanding, respect and benefit, promote strategic trust, and maintain transparent, predictable and responsible conduct in order to reduce the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculation and prevent conflict in the Indo-Pacific region;

REAFFIRMING ASEAN Centrality and the central role of the ASEAN-led regional architecture in maintaining international peace, stability, and security as well as in the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the ASEAN Charter, and the TAC;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Indo-Pacific faces an increasingly complex strategic environment marked by heightened geopolitical competition, emerging security challenges, and greater risks of miscalculation and escalation;

REAFFIRMING the importance of supporting ASEAN-led efforts in maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful maritime commerce and other internationally lawful uses of the sea in the region. Emphasising the importance of non-militarisation and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may raise the risk of accidents, misunderstanding, and miscalculation and may complicate the situation. Reaffirming the need for States to pursue the peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, and to comply with the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). We take note of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on Maintaining and Promoting Stability in the Maritime Sphere in Southeast Asia;

NOTING the continued relevance of preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures, and inclusive regional engagement in addressing both traditional and non-traditional security challenges;

DO HEREBY AFFIRM TO:

1. **UPHOLD** the principles and purposes outlined in the TAC as a foundational code of conduct for peaceful relations, mutual respect, cooperation, and stability in the region;

2. **STRENGTHEN** and utilise ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN-Post Ministerial Conference with Australia, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), to advance the principles of the TAC and support peace and security;
3. **REITERATE** our commitment to preventing and resolving disputes through peaceful means, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, the 1982 UNCLOS and the TAC;
4. **PROMOTE** a culture of dialogue, mutual understanding, strategic trust and transparent, predictable, and responsible conduct that reinforces respect for sovereignty and non-interference, while encouraging constructive engagement on shared challenges;
5. **SUPPORT** the works of ASEAN and relevant ASEAN bodies and entities to develop practical preventive diplomacy, including mechanisms that assess and mitigate risks through exchange of information to facilitate early warning where appropriate and relevant, confidence-building measures, and risk reduction initiatives, to address emerging tensions and help prevent misunderstanding and miscalculation;
6. **NOTE** the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Maritime Cooperation* and its commitment to intensify maritime cooperation under ASEAN-led mechanisms and initiatives in line with the principles of the ASEAN Charter and the AOIP, including the strengthening of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), the formalisation of the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF), and the planned establishment of the ASEAN Maritime Centre in the Philippines;
7. **ENHANCE** cooperation between ASEAN and Australia under the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) to deliver outcomes in areas that contribute to regional stability, including maritime security, economic resilience, supply chain resilience, cyber resilience, countering transnational crime, humanitarian assistance, climate change and disaster management;
8. **REAFFIRM** commitment to increase and mainstream practical cooperation in the four priority areas of the AOIP, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, economic and other possible areas of cooperation, including through ASEAN-led mechanisms like the EAS, in support of the implementation of the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action (2025-2029) and to further reinforce the ASEAN-Australia CSP;
9. **SUPPORT** the full implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security and the meaningful participation and leadership

of women in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and regional cooperation efforts in advancing objectives and principles of TAC;

10. **PROMOTE** the Youth, Peace and Security agenda by strengthening the meaningful participation and leadership of youth across all efforts to sustain and advance peace and stability and enhancing their resilience to traditional and emerging threats, including climate, disaster and digital threats;
11. **UPHOLD** an open, predictable, transparent, inclusive, free, fair, and sustainable rules-based multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization at its core, ensuring that the multilateral trading system remains, non-discriminatory, and capable of addressing contemporary and emerging challenges, supported by our regional economic architecture, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP), and the upgraded Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA);
12. **SUPPORT** ASEAN's efforts to promote dialogue, coordination, and cooperation to build regional resilience, including strengthening energy security, financial resilience, and macroeconomic stability; safeguarding food security and agricultural supply chains; strengthening open and rules-based trade, supply chains, and market stability; and strengthening people-centred and humanitarian response;
13. **COMMIT TO** strengthening Southeast Asia's energy security by accelerating the clean energy transition, including through support for the ASEAN Power Grid; cooperation to strengthen energy policy, planning and management; support for the development of clean energy supply chains and infrastructure; and the mobilisation of finance for renewable energy projects;
14. **SUPPORT** ASEAN's efforts to revitalise the ARF, to enhance its effectiveness, relevance, and function as the leading regional security forum and to promote confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy, as well as to support its capacity to address emerging political and security challenges;
15. **SUPPORT** ASEAN's ongoing efforts to enhance the TAC's relevance and visibility in the region and beyond, including by working together towards the successful adoption of an ASEAN-sponsored resolution to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the TAC during the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and aligning external engagements with the Guidelines on the Modalities for Engagement with HCPs under the TAC;
16. **PROMOTE** the operationalisation of the Guidelines on the Modalities for Engagement of ASEAN with HCPs under the TAC, adopted by the 59th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which established modalities of engagement aimed at deepening cooperation with HCPs, especially those that do not yet maintain formal partnerships with ASEAN;

17. **UTILISE** the principles espoused in the TAC to guide responses to contemporary challenges, including geopolitical and geostrategic shifts, emerging technologies, and non-traditional security threats, and contribute to an enabling environment for sustainable development, economic cooperation, and shared prosperity;
18. **COMMIT TO** working together, in partnership and solidarity, to ensure the TAC continues to serve as a guiding framework for regional relations and as a foundation for preventing conflict and fostering enduring peace.