



Remarks

Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn,

at

**Reception Commemorating the Fifth Anniversary of the ASEAN–China
Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**

Beijing, P.R. China, 15 September 2026

***Your Excellency Peng Qinghua, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of
the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China,***

***Your Excellency Pham Thanh Binh, Chair of the ASEAN Committee in Beijing
and Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the People's
Republic of China,***

Excellencies, Ambassadors of ASEAN Member States to China,

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my great pleasure to join you today as we commemorate the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN–China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
2. I wish to extend our deep appreciation to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China for their enduring friendship and close partnership with ASEAN. This anniversary gives us a fitting occasion to look back on how far our relations have come, take stock of what we have achieved, and look ahead to what lies before us.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. ASEAN–China relations have come a long way since the establishment of our Dialogue Relations in 1991. Over the past 35 years, our cooperation has broadened and deepened steadily across the political-security, economic and socio-cultural spheres.
4. The establishment of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021 marked an important milestone. Five years on, the CSP has shown its worth: a partnership that delivers real benefits for our more than 2 billion peoples and contributes to regional peace, stability, and prosperity. Our priorities span trade and investment, connectivity, digital transformation, agriculture, education, health, tourism and

sustainable development. They also extend to energy, maritime cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. This broad scope reflects a partnership that keeps growing and evolving to meet changing needs and new opportunities.

5. More specifically, our economic partnership has grown considerably. ASEAN and China remain each other's largest trading partners, a reflection of how close, interdependent and interconnected our economies have become. The signing of the ASEAN–China Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Protocol gives us a strong platform for even more deepening economic ties, and we look forward to its early entry into force and effective implementation.
6. We also place great importance on people-to-people ties. Tourist arrivals from China to ASEAN reached 21.8 million in 2025¹, making China the region's largest source of external visitors. Education, tourism, culture, youth exchanges and other forms of people-to-people connectivity have brought our peoples closer together. We should continue to nurture these bonds, which give our partnership a strong and lasting foundation between our two sides.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The global environment we navigate together has grown more complex, more challenging, and more uncertain, and ASEAN and China share an interest in building regional resilience and preserving peace, stability and cooperation. ASEAN sincerely appreciates China's longstanding support for ASEAN Centrality, its active participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms, and its support for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. We highly value China's commitment to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.
8. Our partnership should continue to be anchored in dialogue, diplomacy, mutual trust, cooperation and respect for international law. ASEAN welcomes the positive momentum in negotiations on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and looks forward to further progress towards its early conclusion.
9. Looking ahead, we see room for deeper cooperation in digital transformation and innovation, drawing on the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) and on China's strengths in technology, digital infrastructure, e-commerce and emerging fields such as artificial intelligence. We also look forward to strengthening cooperation in energy security and clean energy, supply chain resilience, connectivity and sustainable development, including support for the ASEAN Power Grid.

¹ ASEAN Statistics, preliminary Tourism Data as of 12 February 2026. For 2025, data for Timor-Leste available up to Q2 only and Malaysia's data refer to total visitor arrivals, including both tourists and excursionists. Brunei Darussalam's data by country of origin cover arrivals by air only.

10. We should also continue to work together on emerging and non-traditional challenges, including transnational crime, cybercrime and online scams, while deepening cooperation on food security, climate change and disaster management.
11. The new ASEAN–China Plan of Action 2026–2030 gives us an important framework to advance these priorities and align our cooperation more closely with ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future, and we look forward to its effective implementation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. As Excellency Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted at the ASEAN–China Post-Ministerial Conference in July this year in Manila, the fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is a significant milestone and, more importantly, a new starting point. We share this outlook and look forward to working closely to turn our shared aspirations into concrete results.
13. As we embark on the next chapter, I am confident that our partnership can become more connected, innovative, sustainable and people-centred, delivering greater benefits to our peoples and contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Let us reaffirm our commitment to taking the ASEAN–China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership further, guided by our shared vision of a region that is peaceful, open, inclusive, resilient and prosperous.
14. Once again, I wish to congratulate ASEAN and China on the fifth anniversary of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. May our enduring friendship and longstanding partnership continue to flourish, bringing peace, stability and lasting prosperity to our peoples and the wider region.

Thank you.
