

2009 JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 42ND ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING “ACTING TOGETHER TO COPE WITH GLOBAL CHALLENGES”

Issued in Phuket, Thailand on 20 July 2009

[\[http://www.aseansec.org/PR-42AMM-JC.pdf\]](http://www.aseansec.org/PR-42AMM-JC.pdf)

INTRODUCTION	2
ASEAN COMMUNITY BUILDING	2
ASEAN CHARTER.....	2
NARROWING THE DEVELOPMENT GAP AND INITIATIVE FOR ASEAN INTEGRATION.....	3
ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY (APSC).....	3
TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (TAC).....	4
SOUTH CHINA SEA.....	4
ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC)	5
ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC)	5
BUILDING REGIONAL RESILIENCE.....	6
Economic and Financial Stability	6
Food and Energy Security	6
Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change.....	7
Disaster Management.....	7
Pandemic Diseases	8
EXTERNAL RELATIONS	8
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES.....	10
Korean Peninsula	10
Middle East	11
Combating Terrorism/Extremism	11
Nuclear Disarmament.....	12
Developments in Myanmar	12
Human Trafficking	12
43RD ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING.....	13

INTRODUCTION

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) met at the 42nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) from 19-20 July 2009 in Phuket, Thailand. His Excellency Kasit Piromya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Chairman of ASEAN, chaired the Meeting. We had extensive, open and fruitful discussions under the theme of "Acting Together to Cope with Global Challenges".

2. His Excellency Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of Thailand, addressed the Opening Ceremony of the 42nd AMM. He underlined the need for ASEAN Member States to fully translate the spirit and letter of the ASEAN Charter into concrete actions with a view to realising an ASEAN Community by 2015. He also emphasised that cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners should be further strengthened to be able to effectively respond to current and future challenges including the impact of the global economic and financial crisis, environmental and natural disaster as well as potential pandemics and other security issues.

ASEAN COMMUNITY BUILDING

3. We welcomed the progress made in our community-building process highlighted by the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter on 15 December 2008. We reaffirmed our resolve to further intensify our efforts to realise an ASEAN Community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible.

4. We also reviewed the follow-up actions to our Leaders' decisions during the 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin, particularly the implementation of the Cha-am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015.

5. We reiterated our commitment to promote greater participation by our people in the ASEAN community-building process. In this connection, we were pleased with the outcomes of the Informal Meetings between our Leaders and the representatives from various groups, namely the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), youth and civil society organisations from ASEAN Member States during the 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin.

6. We underscored the importance of enhancing ASEAN's central role in the regional architecture. In this regard, we agreed to review regularly our efforts to enhance our resilience, competitiveness and responsiveness, so that ASEAN can remain the primary driving force in our region.

ASEAN CHARTER

7. We noted with satisfaction the efforts and progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Charter. In this connection, we welcomed the establishment of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) in Jakarta and endorsed its Rules of Procedure (ROP). The CPR will be instrumental in strengthening cooperation among ASEAN Member States,

improving coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat and enhancing relations with our external partners. We also welcomed the restructuring of ASEAN Secretariat.

8. We were pleased with our fruitful meeting with the High Level Panel on an ASEAN human rights body (HLP), during which we endorsed the Terms of Reference for the ASEAN human rights body. We agreed to name this body the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. We commended the HLP for completing its task and agreed to recommend to the ASEAN Leaders to launch the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights at the 15th ASEAN Summit in October 2009. We entrusted the HLP to draft the political declaration for the launch of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

9. We welcomed the progress made by the High Level Legal Experts' Group on Follow-up to the ASEAN Charter (HLEG). We considered and endorsed the HLEG's recommendation on the legal personality of ASEAN and approved ad referendum a draft agreement on privileges and immunity of ASEAN. We agreed to extend the mandate of HLEG to finalise dispute settlement mechanisms and other legal issues under the ASEAN Charter for our consideration at the 15th ASEAN Summit in October 2009.

NARROWING THE DEVELOPMENT GAP AND INITIATIVE FOR ASEAN INTEGRATION

10. We agreed to intensify our efforts in narrowing the development gap in ASEAN to enhance ASEAN integration. In this connection, we welcomed the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan II for the period 2009-2015 which was approved by our Leaders during the 14th ASEAN Summit. The Work Plan, together with the three ASEAN Community Blueprints, will help move forward the community-building process in a more balanced, inclusive and sustainable manner.

11. We also expressed appreciation to our Dialogue Partners and other international institutions for their support and contributions to the IAI. We called for further strengthening of the cooperation between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners in narrowing the development gap including ASEAN sub-regional development programmes.

12. We also welcomed the adoption of the Joint Declaration on the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in ASEAN by our Leaders at the 14th ASEAN Summit, which reflects the need to narrow the development gap to enhance ASEAN regional cooperation and integration.

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY (APSC)

13. We reaffirmed our commitment to implement the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint adopted by our Leaders during the 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin. This Blueprint envisages ASEAN to be a rules-based Community of shared values and norms in a just, democratic and harmonious environment; a cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region with shared responsibility for comprehensive security; as well as a dynamic and outward-

looking region in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. We noted that an APSC Communication Plan is being developed and encouraged its early completion and implementation with a view to bringing the APSC Blueprint to our peoples.

TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (TAC)

14. We warmly welcomed the impending accession by the United States of America to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as a strong signal of its commitment to peace and security in the region.

15. We also looked forward to the signing of the Third Protocol amending the TAC to enable the EU/EC to accede to the TAC in the future. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

16. We reaffirmed the role of ASEAN as the primary driving force of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process and the ARF as the primary forum in enhancing political and security dialogue and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

17. In this regard, we welcomed the 15th Anniversary of the ARF and its achievements to date. We looked forward to the adoption of the ARF Vision Statement at the 16th ARF which would set a clearer direction for the ARF to effectively contribute to strengthening peace, security and stability in the region. We also look forward to the development of works plan to implement the ARF Vision Statement and on preventive diplomacy. Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)

18. We reviewed the implementation of the Plan of Action of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and agreed to exert greater efforts to ensure that various programmes and activities indicated in the Plan of Action are carried out.

19. We also agreed to continue to engage with the Nuclear Weapon States to encourage them to accede to the SEANWFZ Protocol as soon as possible. 20. We welcomed Viet Nam as the incoming Chair of the SEANWFZ Commission starting January 2010.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

21. We reaffirmed the continuing importance of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea of 2002 (DOC) as a milestone document between ASEAN and China, embodying our collective commitment to ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes in the area. We believe that the Declaration has been effective in building mutual trust and confidence among the claimants in the area and in maintaining peace and stability in the region. We underscored the need to intensify efforts to move forward the implementation of the Declaration, including the early finalisation of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the DOC. We looked forward to the eventual conclusion of a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

22. We encouraged the continued exercise of self-restraint by all the parties concerned and the promotion of confidence-building measures in this area and welcomed their commitment to resolving disputes in the South China Sea by peaceful means in conformity with the spirit of the DOC and recognised principles of international law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC)

23. We welcomed the ongoing implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint and the improvement of the AEC Scorecard to serve as a monitoring mechanism to identify specific actions that must be undertaken by ASEAN collectively or by ASEAN Member States individually in implementing the AEC Blueprint.

24. We appreciated the signing of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA), the Sectoral Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Inspection of Manufacturers of Medicinal Products, and the Protocol of the 7th Package of AFAS commitments at the sidelines of the recent 14th ASEAN Summit. We recognised that these agreements contain a number of key features that would enhance transparency, certainty and predictability in the ASEAN legal framework and enhance ASEAN's rules based system, which is of importance to the ASEAN business community and consumers.

25. We underscored the importance that the benefits of economic integration be quickly accrued to the people of ASEAN through timely implementation of the provisions of the AEC Blueprint and the AEC Communication Plan. We further underlined the need to foster a strong partnership among the public and private sector and the ASEAN Secretariat in order to collectively act as a driving force to accelerate the realisation of our commitments towards achieving the AEC by 2015.

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC)

26. We reaffirmed our commitment to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint adopted at the 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin. We acknowledged the contribution of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) in realising an ASEAN Community that is people-centred and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced.

27. We looked forward to the Inaugural Meeting of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council (ASCC) to be held on 23-24 August 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand.

BUILDING REGIONAL RESILIENCE

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

28. We expressed concern over the impacts of the global economic and financial crisis on trade, investment and socio-economic development in the region. We reiterated our commitment to implementing necessary measures to overcome the crisis guided by the Press Statement on the Global Economic and Financial Crisis issued by our Leaders in Cha-am Hua Hin in March 2009 including macroeconomic policy coordination, standing firm against protectionism, implementing the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, and intensifying efforts for a strong Doha Development Agenda outcome.

29. We welcomed the Joint Press Statement on ASEAN+3 Cooperation in Response to Global Economic and Financial Crisis issued by ASEAN Plus Three Leaders on 3 June 2009 in Bangkok under which ASEAN and our Plus Three Partners agreed to strengthen the regional self-help financial mechanism through the establishment of a regional pooling reserve arrangement under the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) with the total fund of USD 120 billion. In this regard, we looked forward to the launching of the CMIM by the end of 2009 as agreed upon by the ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting in Bali on 3 May 2009. We also welcomed the agreement of the ASEAN Plus Three Finance Ministers to develop a regional surveillance mechanism to monitor and analyze regional economies and support the CMIM decision-making.

30. We also welcomed the Joint Press Statement of the East Asia Summit on the Global Economic and Financial Crisis issued by EAS Leaders on 3 June 2009 in Bangkok under which ASEAN and our EAS Partners agreed to stand firm against protectionist and distortionary measures, support the agreement at the G-20 London Summit, stress the importance of international cooperation to develop concrete measures to alleviate the impact of the crisis, strengthen the region's growth potential and expand demand, and support efforts by export credit agencies (ECAs), international financial institutions and private banks to ensure adequate finance for business and trade.

FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY

31. We recognised the paramount importance of food and energy security for sustainable economic growth in the region. We also underlined the need to address these inter-related issues in a comprehensive manner. In this connection, we recalled the signing of the ASEAN Petroleum Security Agreement and the adoption of the Statement on Food Security in the ASEAN Region by our Leaders at the 14th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin as measures to ensure food and energy security in the region.

32. We agreed that well functioning markets are keys to ensuring stable energy and food supply. We agreed to further enhance our cooperation in exploring alternatives to conventional energy resources, while taking into account the potential impact on agricultural land for food

crops. We also supported enhanced cooperation in staples and food products in a manner that will reduce trade and market distortion and ensure food availability in the region.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

33. We recognised that climate change constitutes a major threat to sustainable development and requires urgent concerted and coordinated actions at national, regional and international levels.

34. We emphasised that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol are the main channels for international negotiations and cooperation on the issue of climate change. In this connection, we reaffirmed our commitment to the objectives, purposes and principles of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, including the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective national circumstances and capabilities. We also pledged to work closely together and with other Partners for a successful conclusion of the Copenhagen Conference of State Parties to the UNFCCC.

35. We welcomed sub-regional cooperation among ASEAN Member States such as cooperation among Mekong River Countries and encouraged them to further strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interests, including sustainable development and water resource management.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

36. We were pleased with the progress made in the post-Nargis recovery efforts under the ASEAN led mechanism in Myanmar and had fruitful discussion on the recommendations by the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the Chairman of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis (AHTF).

37. Considering that the mandate ends in July 2010, we tasked the AHTF and the TCG to review the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) to take into consideration priority deliverables for the next twelve months. In this regard, we agreed that our continued support for Myanmar will focus on livelihoods, shelter, health, education and disaster risk reduction. We also tasked the AHTF and the TCG to work closely with the relevant government ministries to facilitate access for genuine or bona fide humanitarian workers to support recovery work in the Nargis-affected areas.

38. We called upon the AHTF to work closely with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) to document and institutionalise the good practices from the post-Nargis operations to strengthen the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and the operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).

39. We also welcomed the designated role of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as ASEAN's humanitarian assistance coordinator.

PANDEMIC DISEASES

40. We reaffirmed our collective efforts to enhance regional capabilities in surveillance, preparedness and response to pandemic diseases.

41. We welcomed the successful outcome of the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers Special Meeting on Influenza A (H1N1) held in Bangkok on 8 May 2009. We underlined the need to fulfill our commitments under the Joint Ministerial Statement including the continuous implementation of national pandemic preparedness plans, strengthening surveillance and responses, and effective communication especially within the public realm to avoid panic and social disruption. We also stressed the need to enhance cooperation to produce affordable vaccines for Influenza A (H1N1).

42. We encouraged the relevant Sectoral Bodies to explore possible establishment of research and manufacturing facilities and arrangements in the region to combat future disease outbreaks.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

43. We reaffirmed our commitments to ensure that ASEAN remains an outward-looking community through enhancing engagement and cooperation with our external partners.

44. We welcomed the appointment of Ambassadors to ASEAN from our Dialogue Partners and other Non-ASEAN Member States as an indication of their commitment to enhance cooperation with ASEAN. We endorsed the procedures for the accreditation of Ambassadors to ASEAN from Non-ASEAN Member States and Relevant Inter-governmental Organisations.

45. We welcomed the signing of the MOU on the Second Phase of the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program (AADCP II), valued at AUD 57 million, in further supporting ASEAN in implementing its economic integration priorities and policies, in line with the AEC Blueprint.

46. We looked forward to the adoption of the Joint Declaration on the ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership which would give the new impetus for both ASEAN and Canada to elevate and enhance relations in all areas of cooperation. We looked forward to working closely with Canada to formulate the Plan of Action for the ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership.

47. We appreciated China's active role in developing transportation infrastructure between ASEAN and China and welcomed the establishment of the US\$ 10 billion ASEAN-China Fund for Investment Cooperation which will significantly contribute to the completion of transportation links in the region. We looked forward to the signing of ASEAN-China Investment Agreement at the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting in August 2009. Upon the completion of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area, we believed that there is a need to explore ways and means to further strengthen ASEAN-China economic cooperation in all dimensions. We welcomed China's plan to provide US\$ 15 billion commercial credit, including US\$ 1.7 billion preferential loans, to ASEAN Member States in the next 3-5 years.

48. We reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN-EU cooperation and relations, and emphasised the need to further strengthen ASEAN-EU dialogue on the basis of equal partnership and mutual benefit. In this regard, we were satisfied with the successful conclusion of the 17th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 27-28 May 2009, particularly the endorsement of the Phnom Penh Agenda (2009-2010).

49. We welcomed the resolution of the remaining technical issues under the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement and looked forward to its signing at the earliest opportunity. We are confident that the Agreement will allow our producers, exporters and consumers to derive full benefits from the potential of our combined markets.

50. We appreciated Japan's endeavour to support the ASEAN community building process and the narrowing of development gap. We welcomed Prime Minister Taro Aso's "Growth Initiative towards Doubling the Size of Asia's Economy" to overcome the current global economic slowdown and financial situation and prevent the region from future crises. We also recognised the need to exert greater effort to expand our trade and investment through the ASEAN-Japan Closer Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement. We appreciated Japan's financial contribution of US\$ 62 million to Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) as emergency assistance to the ASEAN Member States affected by the global economic slowdown, as well as US\$ 13.5 million for cooperation on disaster management.

51. We welcomed the successful outcome of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Commemorative Summit celebrating the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations on 1-2 June 2009, on Jeju Island, and the signing of the ASEAN-ROK Investment Agreement. We also agreed to enhance our cooperation with the ROK to realise the various targets set forth by our Leaders including the increase in two-way trade volume to US\$ 150 billion by 2015 through the ASEAN-ROK FTA. We welcomed the ROK's initiative to establish US\$ 200 million East Asia Climate Change Partnership Fund and its commitment to allocate US\$ 100 million from this Fund to the ASEAN Member States to deal with climate change.

52. We welcomed the signing of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area during the 14th ASEAN Summit on 27 February 2009 in Cha-am Hua Hin which was a milestone for dialogue relations.

53. We reiterated our commitment to the realisation of the Roadmap on the Implementation of the ASEAN-Russia Comprehensive Programme. We also looked forward to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the ASEAN Centre in Moscow with a view to launching the Centre at Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO) later this year. We noted the outcome of ASEAN-Russia SOM held in Manila in April 2009, including the proposed convening of the 2nd ASEAN-Russia Summit and the decision to establish a working group to identify concrete deliverables of the Summit.

54. We welcomed the renewed interest of the United States in promoting peace and security in Southeast Asia through its impending accession to the TAC. We also welcomed the adoption of the revised Priorities for Cooperation under the ASEAN-US Enhanced Partnership which would

reinvigorate the cooperation between ASEAN and the US and contribute positively to ASEAN's community building efforts. ASEAN would work closely with the US towards the successful conclusion of the ASEAN-US Science and Technology Agreement.

55. We welcomed the endorsement of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation and the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan. The Guidelines will help accelerate the implementation of the Joint Statement and the Work Plan in a more effective and comprehensive manner. We also noted the completion of the establishment of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund with an initial amount of US\$ 3 million. We noted the progress of the Phase II feasibility study of East Asia Free Trade Area (EAFTA) and looked forward to the submission of the final report to the 12th ASEAN Plus Three Summit in October 2009.

56. We welcomed the encouraging development of the EAS in East Asia's evolving regional architecture. To follow up on the Leaders' instruction at the 3rd East Asia Summit, we tasked our officials to work with ASEAN Secretariat to consider possible structures to better coordinate the EAS process in order to allow it to respond to the emerging challenges. We appreciated the important role played by Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in supporting ASEAN integration. We noted the progress of the Phase II feasibility study of Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA) and looked forward to the submission of the final report to the 4th East Asia Summit in October 2009. We also welcomed Singapore's offer to host the 2nd EAS Environmental Ministers' Meeting in October 2009.

57. We welcomed the outcome of the 1st ASEAN-GCC Ministerial Meeting on 29-30 June 2009 in Manama, Bahrain, including the adoption of the ASEAN-GCC Joint Vision and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the ASEAN Secretariat and the GCC Secretariat.

58. We welcomed the outcome of the 1st ASEAN-MERCOSUR Ministerial Meeting on 24 November 2008 in Brasilia, Brazil, and tasked our officials to prepare a region to region roadmap and action plan on issues of mutual interest.

59. We expressed our appreciation to the ASEAN Country Coordinators for the ASEAN Dialogue Partners 2006-2009 for taking overall responsibility in coordinating and promoting the interests of ASEAN in its relations with the relevant Dialogue Partners. In this connection, we were pleased to announce the new ASEAN Country Coordinatorship for 2009-2012 and reiterated our support for them in fulfilling their responsibilities as the Country Coordinators for the respective Dialogue Partners.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

KOREAN PENINSULA

60. We recalled the statement by our leaders in June 2009 in which they reiterated the condemnation of the recent underground nuclear test and missile launches undertaken by the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which constitute clear violations of the Six-Party Agreement and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including UNSC Resolution 1874.

61. We urged the DPRK to fully comply with its obligations and relevant UNSC resolutions. We also urged all concerned Parties to return to the Six-Party Talks process as soon as possible and fully implement their commitments made in previous rounds of the Six-Party Talks, which remains the main mechanism for achieving peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

62. We believed that the ASEAN Regional Forum, which includes ASEAN and all participants of the Six-Party Talks, can play a positive and proactive role in promoting peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. We encouraged all concerned parties to actively pursue this objective.

MIDDLE EAST

63. We discussed the situation in the Middle East and emphasized the need to ensure long-term peace, security and stability in the region. We called for a final, just and comprehensive settlement with the realization of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secured and recognized borders, based on the Roadmap, the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions as well as the Arab Peace Initiatives.

64. We were encouraged by the pronouncement of the United States recently relating to the Middle East Peace Process, given the active role it plays in addressing the conflict. We expressed our hope that the United States and other members of the Quartet would continue to exert their influence to further encourage the parties concerned to restart negotiations on the Peace Process.

65. We reiterated our call for the unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people in Gaza in order to help alleviate their plight. In this regard, we expressed our concern that the border crossings into Gaza has not been opened to allow humanitarian aid and basic supplies to be provided to the people of Gaza.

COMBATING TERRORISM/EXTREMISM

66. We strongly condemned the bombings in Jakarta on 17 July 2009, which caused loss of innocent lives and injuries. We extended our solidarity to Indonesia and affirm our confidence in the Indonesian Government to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice. We also reiterated our commitment to strengthen all efforts to combat terrorism/extremism in the region. In this connection, we encouraged ASEAN Member States that have not done so to ratify the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT). We also stressed, among others, the need to empower moderate sectors of society and the promotion of inter-faith dialogue. In this regard, we expressed support for the Philippines' hosting of the Special NAM Ministerial Meeting on Inter-faith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace in December 2009.

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

67. We took note of encouraging developments on nuclear disarmament in various fora and in particular welcomed the preliminary bilateral agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We recalled the commitment of the People's Republic of China on its position not to be the first to use nuclear weapon. At multilateral level, we hope that all participating countries in the Conference on Disarmament, would resume the negotiation of nuclear disarmament as called for in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also looked forward to the convening of the Review Conference of State Parties to NPT in 2010 for the realization of the objectives and principles enshrined in the NPT in a balanced manner and agreed to support and work closely with the Philippines' presidency of the Review Conference.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MYANMAR

68. We took note of the briefing by Myanmar on the recent visit of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Myanmar. We encouraged the Myanmar Government to hold free, fair and inclusive elections in 2010, thereby laying down a good foundation for future social and economic development. In this regard, recalling the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on 19 November 2007, we reiterated our calls on the Government of Myanmar to immediately release all those under detention, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, thereby paving way for genuine reconciliation and meaningful dialogue involving all parties concerned and with a view to enabling them to participate in the 2010 General Elections.

69. Myanmar expressed its view that pressure from the outside and economic sanctions were hampering Myanmar's democratization and development efforts. Recognising the fact that the Myanmar Government has been trying to address many complex challenges, we remained constructively engaged with Myanmar as part of the ASEAN Community building process. We continued to support the ongoing good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General and welcomed Myanmar's assurances to cooperate fully with the United Nations.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

70. We recognised the cross-regional dimension of the problem of human trafficking and reiterated the need to further enhance the cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination. We also stressed the need for all parties concerned to address the root causes of human trafficking such as by developing the necessary capacities and institutions.

71. We welcomed the continued efforts undertaken at the regional level in addressing the issue of human trafficking. In this connection, we welcomed the outcome of the 3rd Bali Regional Ministerial Conference (3rd BRMC) on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime on 14-15 April 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. We recognised that the problem of human trafficking should be addressed cooperatively and comprehensively.

43RD ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING

72. We looked forward to the 43rd AMM/PMC/17th ARF to be held in July 2010 in Vietnam.