

## **2012 LEADERS' STATEMENT ON ASEAN PLUS THREE PARTNERSHIP ON CONNECTIVITY**

*Adopted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 19 November 2012*

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, on 19 November 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation;

RECOGNIZING the importance of the multi-layered ASEAN-led regional mechanisms as well as ASEAN's relations with its Dialogue Partners, which are mutually reinforcing in enhancing ASEAN Connectivity;

RECALLING the Phnom Penh Agenda, adopted by ASEAN Leaders during the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, that has given a high priority on the timely implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC), to accelerate the integration process and strengthen ASEAN's external relations;

REAFFIRMING our commitment on this occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation to the long-term goal of building an East Asian community, with the ASEAN as the driving force and the ASEAN Plus Three process as a main vehicle, taking into account that East Asia Summit (EAS) framework also plays a complimentary role in community building in the region;

ACKNOWLEDGING that ASEAN Connectivity is a foundation of the development of enhanced connectivity in East Asia and that the enhanced connectivity is one of the key elements in building an East Asian community;

RECALLING ALSO the 2010 Ha Noi Declaration on the Adoption of the MPAC and the 2009 ASEAN Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Connectivity, which will complement and support integration within ASEAN as well as within the broader regional framework in East Asia;

WELCOMING the Declaration of the 6<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) on ASEAN Connectivity adopted in 2011 that promoted the role of EAS partners in ASEAN Connectivity, including to consider the possibility of developing the concept of "Connectivity Master Plan Plus" in the future, which would develop further linkages between ASEAN and its EAS Partners, while maintaining ASEAN Connectivity as a priority by effectively implementing the MPAC;

REAFFIRMING ALSO the importance of ongoing efforts on ASEAN connectivity cooperation under the ASEAN Plus One frameworks, which are complementary and mutually-reinforcing to the ASEAN Plus Three and the EAS frameworks;

REALIZING that the geographical proximity, the increasing interdependence, and the wide-ranging existing mechanisms under the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation are mutually beneficial to the development of ASEAN Plus Three Partnership on Connectivity, which will contribute to the implementation of the MPAC and promote regional connectivity--thereby bringing the region closer towards the shared long-term goal of realizing an East Asian community;

DO HEREBY DECLARE TO:

1. Support ASEAN's efforts in implementing the MPAC;
2. Prioritize enhancing connectivity in all areas of cooperation and mechanisms under the ASEAN Plus Three framework;
3. Develop ASEAN Plus Three partnership to enhance connectivity through the timely implementation of the projects related to connectivity, in particular the 15 Priority Projects identified under the three-pronged strategies of the MPAC, namely physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity;
4. Task our relevant Ministers to explore the possibility of additional financing mechanisms/modalities under ASEAN Plus Three framework to support the implementation of ASEAN connectivity projects.
5. Task our relevant Ministers to study measures to promote infrastructure financing including private sector involvement and public-private partnership in connectivity projects;
6. Task our relevant Ministers to consider establishing study groups, through various mechanisms, to recommend ways and means to push forward ASEAN Plus Three partnership on Connectivity cooperation in relevant areas, covering the three pronged-strategies of the MPAC;
7. Support the ongoing process towards establishing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as well as other measures to facilitate economic activities among ASEAN and its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partners including Plus Three countries;
8. Enhance ASEAN Plus Three cooperation in combating transnational crimes to prevent impediments to connectivity development in the region; and further strengthen cooperation on sectors that will be affected by enhanced connectivity, such as by intensifying capacity building activities and promoting good governance through the sharing of best practices on public-private partnerships, transparency and accountability;
9. Support the establishment of an ASEAN Plus Three University Network (AUN+3), as well as the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Plan of Action on Education, including the promotion of credit transfer system and quality assurances among universities in the ASEAN Plus Three countries;
10. Welcome Siem Reap City as the Cultural City of East Asia for 2012 and agreed to have further discussions on the new initiative of the Cultural City of East Asia;
11. Welcome the designation of the year 2012 as the "Visit ASEAN Plus Three Year";
12. Look forward to the signing of Memorandum of Cooperation on ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Cooperation, which will be one of the key instruments to promote people-to-people connectivity in ASEAN and the Plus Three countries;
13. Task our relevant Ministers to synergize as appropriate ASEAN Plus Three Partnership on Connectivity into the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2007-2017) as well as to consider the possibility of having a "Connectivity Master Plan Plus" in the future in cooperation with the EAS partners;

14. Encourage the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) to work with Plus Three countries to coordinate the efforts in connectivity under ASEAN Plus Three frameworks.