

**2020 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SECOND ASEAN-AUSTRALIA
BIENNIAL SUMMIT:
“A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR RECOVERY”**

Adopted on 14 November 2020

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2020 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SECOND ASEAN-AUSTRALIA BIENNIAL SUMMIT: “A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR RECOVERY”

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1. We, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia, met via videoconference on 14 November 2020, under Viet Nam's 2020 ASEAN Chairmanship, on the occasion of the Second ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit, to mark a new chapter of enhanced relations under the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership.
2. We reaffirm the commitments made in the Joint Statement of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit: The Sydney Declaration on 18 March 2018.
3. We reaffirm that ASEAN and Australia are enduring strategic partners with a shared interest in a peaceful, stable and prosperous region, where international law and the rules-based regional architecture are respected and upheld. We reaffirm our mutual respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, non-interference and political independence of all nations as espoused in the Charter of the United Nations and the ASEAN Charter, as well as the principles contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
4. We recognise that a strong, cohesive and responsive ASEAN is vital to our region's success. As ASEAN's longest-standing dialogue partner, we recognise Australia's commitment to ASEAN Centrality in the regional order and architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive. We acknowledge the importance of ASEAN-led mechanisms, particularly the East Asia Summit (EAS) as the region's premier Leaders-led forum for strategic discussions, to address our region's shared challenges. We commend Viet Nam for its exceptional chairing of ASEAN and the ASEAN-led mechanisms under difficult circumstances in 2020, and look forward to Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021.
5. We further commit to intensifying practical cooperation to enhance resilience and shape a peaceful, stable, and prosperous region for our people, guided by the comprehensive Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2020-2024) and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), including advancing cooperation under the four priority areas of cooperation identified in the AOIP, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and economic and other possible areas of cooperation, and in light of Australia's priorities for the Indo-Pacific.
6. We commit to convene annual ASEAN-Australia Summits from 2021 onwards, marking a new chapter of ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership.

STRONG PARTNERS FOR RECOVERY

7. We are concerned by the continued spread and severity of COVID-19, and its health, social, and long-term economic effects. Responding to the pandemic, including through equitable access to safe, effective and affordable vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics, is a primary challenge for our region. We acknowledge the leading role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global response to COVID-19 and welcomed the resolution on the COVID-19 response, adopted at the 73rd World Health Assembly in May 2020, noting the importance of strengthening multilateral cooperation to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative impacts.

8. We acknowledge ASEAN's leading role to advance a cohesive and effective response to our region's comprehensive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We note the important role of inclusive ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the EAS, in responding to the pandemic. We welcome Australia's commitment to support the global fight against COVID-19, promote development of safe, effective, affordable and accessible vaccines, enhance health security, and assist the region with response and recovery. We particularly welcome Australia's contribution of \$500 million to promote access to safe, effective, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines and regional health security for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. We will continue collaboration under Australia's *Partnerships for Recovery* policy to help ASEAN bolster health security, stability and economic recovery in our region, guided by international research and evidence-based best practice.
9. We reaffirm the need to strengthen health systems and mitigate future pandemics, including through possible cooperation on biodiversity conservation and mitigating risks related to zoonotic diseases through a One Health approach. We will continue to promote regional health cooperation, including through ASEAN-Australia Health Security Initiative and welcome Australia's significant contribution to support the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases.
10. We recognise the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and we acknowledge the importance of an open, inclusive, transparent and rules-based approach, to promote stability as we respond to the pandemic, including by addressing the spread of disinformation and misinformation on COVID-19. We will promote trust, dialogue and cooperation, so our region can devote its full attention to a strong recovery.
11. We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women as well as those who have been made most vulnerable in the region. We recognise the value of an equitable, inclusive and gender sensitive response and a central role for women in recovery. We acknowledge the potential for COVID-19 to reverse development gains in our region and we will work closely to mitigate this.
12. We share a firm commitment to support our region's strong economic recovery. We welcome the ASEAN Hanoi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and reaffirm our shared commitment to ensuring robust supply chains for essential goods and to wind back restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. We commit to sharing information and experiences and to work closely to restore logistic routes and travel links, including for international students, business travellers and other priority cohorts, as the health situation allows. We will refrain from imposing measures, including non-tariff measures that could disrupt the flow of essential goods and services to address the COVID-19 pandemic, while ensuring that any measures introduced are targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary, do not create unnecessary barriers to trade, and comply with the existing WTO rules. We welcome the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework adopted by leaders at the 37th Summit and underscore our commitment to working closely to support its implementation.

OUR REGION'S SECURITY

13. We reaffirm the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. We emphasise 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 complicate the situation. We reaffirm the need for states to pursue the peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and to comply with the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

14. We stress the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We reaffirm our support for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We reiterate our commitment to implement all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions fully and call on all countries to do likewise.
15. We look forward to the convening of the Fact-Finding Missions, when circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic allow, after which a comprehensive assessment of Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership will be developed. We reaffirm our commitment to continue exploring ways to provide capacity building assistance to Timor-Leste, especially through participation in non-policy making activities in ASEAN.
16. Given our significant maritime interests, we affirm our shared view that our region's prosperity and security relies on the peaceful use of seas and oceans, including the right of all States to freedom of navigation. We will enhance our efforts to address maritime challenges and promote the sustainable development of the seas and oceans, including marine pollution from land-based and sea-based sources, and crimes at sea such as piracy, including through the new ASEAN-Australia Political Security Partnership and the implementation of the EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation.
17. We reaffirm our commitment to combating malicious cyber activity, including cybercrime and promoting an open, safe, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace where applicable provisions of international law apply to the use of information and communications technologies by States, including via the ASEAN-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue. We affirm our commitment to promoting international peace and stability for cyberspace based on existing principles of international law, cooperative capacity building, practical confidence building measures, and the implementation of voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs as reflected in the 2015 Report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, endorsed by all UN Member States. We welcome ASEAN's commitment to the development of a long-term regional action plan to ensure effective and practical implementation of the norms of responsible State behaviour through discussions at the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity and other ASEAN platforms.
18. On the twentieth anniversary of UNSCR 1325, we reaffirm our commitment to progress the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in our region, including through the next iteration of the biennial ASEAN-Australia Women Peace and Security Dialogue.
19. We will continue to counter terrorism, prevent and suppress the flow of foreign terrorist fighters in our region, and address the underlying factors and conditions that contribute to the growth and spread of radicalisation towards violent extremism, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Government of Australia on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism. We fully support the implementation of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019 – 2025). We look forward to inaugurating an ASEAN-Australia Dialogue on Counter-terrorism to further our collaboration. We urge online platforms to continue efforts to prevent terrorist and violent extremist content from being streamed, uploaded or re-uploaded.

20. We rededicate ourselves to strengthening our longstanding law enforcement, immigration and customs cooperation including addressing the trafficking of illicit drugs, online child exploitation and abuse, human trafficking, and other transnational crimes. We recognise the particular challenges we share in countering human trafficking and welcome Australia's long-term support to counter this in our region, including through ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process). We will enhance regional capacity to address shared cybersecurity issues, transnational crime, and other political-security challenges, including through the ASEAN-Australia Political-Security Partnership. We will promote stable and resilient communities by supporting safe, orderly and regular migration, including through the TRIANGLE in ASEAN Program. We welcome ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation on addressing illegal wildlife trafficking, to counter its negative impact on biodiversity and to reduce the significant risk to human health posed along the wildlife value chain, including in wildlife wet markets through our engagement at the ASEAN Plus Australia Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC + Australia) Consultations and collaboration with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.
21. We will continue to expand the scope and depth of our defence cooperation to address shared security challenges. We will build collaboration through regional mechanisms, including the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). We commend the success of the ASEAN Australia Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting in February 2020 and will explore further Ministerial dialogue. We value practical cooperation between our defence establishments in response to COVID-19 and will explore opportunities for further collaboration, including on military medicine. We noted Australia's 2020 vision for defence engagement with ASEAN.

OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND FUTURE PROSPERITY

22. As significant economic partners with trade-oriented economies, we recognise the role regional economic integration plays in our shared security and future prosperity. We reaffirm our enduring commitment to free and open markets for trade and investment and underline the critical importance of the rules-based multilateral trading system. We commit to strengthen resilience and sustainability of regional supply chains and to stand firm against protectionism.
23. We welcome the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, serving as a clear signal of our unwavering support for the multilateral trading system, the importance of free and open trade and investment for COVID-19 recovery, regional integration as well as economic development across the region.
24. We will build on the success of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) by upgrading the Agreement Establishing the AANZFTA in a mutually beneficial manner within the agreed timeframe so it remains modern, high-quality, relevant to businesses and supports a long-term post-pandemic economic recovery. We will help our private sectors to strengthen business ties, enhance dialogue, and continue engagement between ASEAN and Australian business chambers as well as encourage our private sectors to work side by side with governments in the region to overcome the challenges during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
25. We will redouble our efforts to deepen cooperation in support of ASEAN's priority agendas for boosting regional connectivity, digital economy, inclusive business, and responding to the fourth industrial revolution, which are critical for economic recovery, including through a successor program to the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II. We welcome the adoption and look forward to the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan IV (2021-2025) in narrowing development gaps within and between ASEAN Member States.

26. We note the necessity of building a connected and integrated ASEAN region, including through supporting sub-regional frameworks, to promote equitable and sustainable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN. We also welcome Australia's contributions to the Mekong sub-region, including to narrow the development gap, promote human resource development, and support economic resilience and sustainable water management.
27. We recognise that a strong digital economy is key to our region's comprehensive recovery. We will boost our region's digital transformation, harness digital economy opportunities, bridge the divide for women participating in the digital economy and support development of a digital ready infrastructure, workforce and cities, including through the extended ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards Initiative and the utilisation of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) and the ASEAN-Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF).
28. We recognise the importance of quality infrastructure development to drive economic recovery, and create new opportunities for inclusive growth. We support ASEAN's initiative to set its own connectivity and infrastructure development priorities. We welcome Australia's substantial, ongoing support for regional connectivity and infrastructure development, including through support for the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025). We emphasise the importance of an enhanced focus on safe, secure and trusted digital infrastructure and digital connectivity to facilitate a strong, resilient COVID-19 recovery.
29. We recognise the importance of close cooperation on customs issues in strengthening trade links, including facilitating trade. We welcome the close relationship between Australia and ASEAN on responses to COVID-19, supply chain security, and enforcement matters. We look forward to exploring opportunities to further enhance Australian Border Force relations with ASEAN.
30. We recognise the deep and varied economic links between Australia and ASEAN and the important role that this interconnectedness will play in COVID-19 economic recovery. We will continue to explore opportunities for dialogue between our finance ministries and central banks. We will work with the International Financial Institutions (IFI) to develop appropriate toolkits and frameworks to facilitate greater debt transparency, strengthen debt management and further develop sustainable financing to support long-term resilient development.
31. We agree that the agricultural and fisheries sectors are central to supporting social and economic recovery across the region and support increased engagement on these issues, including in support of resilient and sustainable food supply chains, and preventing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

OUR PEOPLE

32. ASEAN and Australia share long-standing, deep and dynamic social and cultural connections. We commit to further strengthen our people-to-people links, with a special focus on investing in enduring connections between our future leaders.
33. We acknowledge the contribution of education, sports, arts and cultural exchange programmes between ASEAN and Australia, including through the New Colombo Plan, Australia Awards, and programmes run by the Australia-ASEAN Council, which continue to deepen social and cultural linkages and further strengthen people-to-people links between ASEAN and Australia.

34. We are committed to promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and to harnessing our historical and cultural connections while celebrating diversity and practising respect, trust and inclusion in our region. We share a commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in order to realise sustained and inclusive peace, prosperity and economic development. We welcome ongoing practical cooperation to promote social inclusion, and disability rights in our region. We renew our resolve to promote and protect the human rights of our peoples, as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments we are parties to, and will continue to enhance cooperation, including through further strengthening the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), including through continued consultations between Australia and AICHR, as well as the ASEAN Committee on Women, and ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.
35. We reaffirm our commitment to empower and engage women and girls, by pursuing the realisation of the goals enshrined in the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals. We recognise the need to strengthen the political and leadership roles of women and girls in order to address gender inequalities. We value the full, effective, equal and meaningful representation and participation of all women and girls in the journey towards inclusive and full recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
36. We are concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the risks faced by vulnerable groups, with more poor people being forecasted to be pushed deeper into poverty. We likewise acknowledge that recovering from the pandemic presents an opportunity to recalibrate our laws, policies and programmes to be more responsive and adaptive to the emerging welfare needs of vulnerable groups. As such, we remain committed to steering our development cooperation towards strengthening social protection and social welfare systems, health systems, and education systems, to ensure the access of vulnerable groups to basic public goods and services. We will continue to uphold our respective human rights obligations under relevant international human rights instruments we are parties to in responding to COVID-19.
37. We emphasise that a strong civil service underpins good governance and effective delivery of government services to all people. We welcome the growing links between ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM) and Australian Public Service Commission and our shared work to develop and implement the ASEAN Civil Service Modernisation Study.
38. We also commit to building a resilient post-pandemic ASEAN with enhanced capacity to respond to disasters, including through support for the new ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025 and the critical work of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre).
39. We also reiterate our dedication to implement the Sustainable Development Goals which will help improve the well-being of our peoples and look forward to ASEAN-Australia partnership on sustainable development to enhance complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
40. We recognise that environmental sustainability is critical to our region's sustainable development. Protecting the health and biodiversity of our oceans is one of our most pressing environmental challenges. We commit to work closely to combat marine plastic debris including microplastics, over-exploitation of fisheries, and ocean habitat destruction. We welcome Australia's commitment to phase out recyclable waste exports]. We support actions to address the adverse effects of climate change in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the relevant goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FURTHER DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

41. The strength of the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership has positioned us well to respond to strategic shifts and complex challenges while harnessing new opportunities as our region charts a course for post-pandemic recovery. We welcome the new chapter in our relations, marked by our agreement to convene an annual ASEAN-Australia Summit from 2021, and affirm our commitment to a strong partnership for recovery as we approach 50 years of ASEAN-Australia dialogue relations.