

2020 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 17TH ASEAN-INDIA SUMMIT

Adopted on 12 November 2020

1. The 17th ASEAN-India Summit was held on 12 November 2020 via videoconference. The Summit was chaired by H.E. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The Summit was attended by Heads of State/Government and High Representatives of ASEAN Member States and H.E. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance.
2. We noted with satisfaction the significant progress in ASEAN-India dialogue relations, with the implementation of various programmes and activities across the three ASEAN Community pillars, based on the Plan of Action of the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2016-2020). We looked forward to further enhancing ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership through the implementation of the new Plan of Action (2021-2025) adopted at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Session with India on 12 September 2020.
3. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing collaboration in addressing the unprecedented challenges brought by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic as well as accelerating the post-pandemic recovery process in both the ASEAN region and India. ASEAN Leaders welcomed India's announcement to contribute USD 1 million to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. ASEAN Leaders encouraged India's support to the ASEAN Regional Reserves of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies, ASEAN's Comprehensive Recovery Framework, as well as other relevant cooperation in the preparedness, prevention, detection and response measures to mitigate COVID-19 impact and future pandemics or outbreaks. We underscored the need for collaboration on medicine and vaccine security and self-reliance, including scientific research, development and distribution of quality COVID-19 vaccines and medicine that are affordable, safe, effective and accessible to all, whilst building and maintaining resilient, open, and connected supply chains and supporting a sustained economic recovery.
4. We reiterated our shared commitment to maintaining the ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the evolving regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based. ASEAN Leaders appreciated India's active participation and positive contribution to ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). We agreed to continue utilising these mechanisms to effectively respond to traditional and non-traditional security challenges.
5. We resolved to enhance ASEAN-India collaborative efforts in combating transnational crimes, including countering terrorism and violent extremism, combating illicit drug trafficking, supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025) and strengthening cooperation on cybersecurity through supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy and through the various ASEAN-led mechanisms by promoting technical cooperation and capacity building. We also noted the importance of increasing dialogue and cooperation in the maritime domain, through existing relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), to exchange views and share best practices in addressing common challenges on maritime issues.

6. ASEAN Leaders reiterated the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which serves as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean. ASEAN welcomed opportunities to promote practical cooperation with India in the key areas identified in the AOIP, and in line with the common objectives and principles of the AOIP with a view to promoting mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit as well as to contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. ASEAN also welcomed the opportunities to explore cooperation with India in areas that India promoted under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.
7. We recognised the significant economic relations between ASEAN and India, with India as ASEAN's sixth largest trading partner and eighth largest source of FDI among ASEAN Dialogue Partners. In 2019, the two-way trade between ASEAN and India reached USD 77.0 billion, while total FDI inflows from India amounted to USD 2.0 billion. We underscored the importance of further strengthening trade and investment between ASEAN and India to ensure greater market access and enhance the facilitation of trade for our businesses, including through the full utilisation of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA). In this regard, we looked forward to the commencement of the scoping exercise to determine the elements or areas to be covered by the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) review. We also welcomed the implementation of the ASEAN-India Trade in Services Agreement by all Parties.
8. We encouraged the ASEAN-India Business Council to further enhance its role in promoting business-to-business and economic cooperation between ASEAN and India more specifically in the area of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and digital transformation through capacity building measures and sharing best practices for of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), healthcare, start-ups and technology, connectivity, as well as women and youth empowerment through skills development. We also emphasised the importance of further enhancing of ASEAN-India cooperation in other economic sectors such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Skill Development and Human Resource Development, Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), tourism, food, agriculture and forestry, finance and energy, including renewable energy.
9. We emphasised the importance of strengthening ASEAN-India connectivity cooperation to advance the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 as well as exploring synergies between the MPAC 2025 and India's connectivity strategies under India's Act East Policy through "Connecting the Connectivities" approach. We looked forward to concrete cooperation in sustainable infrastructure, including through capacity building activities and enhancement of investment and business environments. We noted the completion of the study by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) commissioned by India on "The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and Its Possible Eastward Extension to Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Viet Nam: Challenges and Opportunities". We looked forward to timely completion of the India-Thailand-Myanmar Trilateral Highway as well as the commencement of the development of its extension to Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. We supported efforts to strengthen aviation and maritime connectivity by working towards the conclusion of the ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement (AI-ATA) and the ASEAN-India Maritime Transport Agreement (AI-MTA). We also looked forward to India's support for and collaboration with the ASEAN Smart Cities Network.

10. ASEAN Leaders appreciated India's support in the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III (2016-2020) through, among others, the provision of scholarships for students from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) to pursue Master's/Post Graduate Diploma at Nalanda University and the establishment of IT Training Centres in CLMV countries. The Meeting looked forward to the continued implementation of the ASEAN-India Space Cooperation Programme. ASEAN Leaders looked forward to India's continued support in the implementation of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025). ASEAN leaders also welcomed India's continued cooperation in sub-regional development, including through the Mekong-Ganga cooperation, as well as to promote sustainable and equitable development in ASEAN, through aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN.
11. We were pleased to note the enhancement of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership through 1.5 track dialogues, cooperation in education, culture and people-to-people contacts, among others, through the Delhi Dialogue, ASEAN-India Youth Summits, ASEAN-India Youth Awards, ASEAN-India Students Exchange Programmes, Scholarship Programmes for ASEAN students at Nalanda University, ASEAN-India Media Exchange Programmes, ASEAN-India Research Training Fellowship, ASEAN-India Collaborative R&D, and Special Course for ASEAN Diplomats. We also noted the first batch of ASEAN students has joined online classes at various Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) despite COVID-related disruptions under the PhD Fellowship Programme for ASEAN students. We welcomed the successful convening of the 6th Roundtable of the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (6th AINTT) and looked forward to the convening of the 3rd International Conference on ASEAN-India Cultural and Civilisational Links. We also looked forward to the establishment of the ASEAN-India Network of Universities to enhance links and cooperation amongst universities, academia and students of both sides. We were pleased to note the successful conduct of the 2nd ASEAN-India Track 1.5 Dialogue on Cyber Issues and looked forward to the ASEAN-India Hackathon in January 2021.
12. We committed to further enhancing collaboration in addressing climate change issues, conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, as well as enhancing regional and sub-regional capacities on disaster management and promoting sustainable and equitable development. We also looked forward to enhancing cooperation in exchanging knowledge and capacity building to build a clean and green ASEAN Community through chemicals and waste management protection of the environment, and the development of environmentally sustainable cities including urban biodiversity.
13. We discussed international and regional issues of common interest and concern, and affirmed the importance of a rules-based order in the region. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We encouraged the substantive negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) within a mutually-agreed timeline. We also stressed the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures, as well as practical and mutually beneficial cooperation to enhance, among others, trust and confidence amongst parties. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Leaders over recent developments, including land reclamations, activities and serious incidents, in the South China Sea, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions, and may undermine peace, security, and stability in the region. We reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation, as well as to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes

in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We further reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the DOC that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

14. We looked forward to further deepening and strengthening the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership across the political-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars to bring greater benefits for peoples of both sides as well as sustainable peace, stability and prosperity in the region.