

2020 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 8TH ASEAN-UNITED STATES SUMMIT

Adopted on 14 November 2020

1. The 8th ASEAN-United States (U.S.) Summit was held via videoconference on 14 November 2020. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and attended by Heads of State/Government and High Representatives of ASEAN Member States, as well as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Robert C. O'Brien, Special Envoy of the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance.
2. We welcomed the growing relations between ASEAN and the U.S., including through the full implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership (2016-2020). As this year marks the 43rd Anniversary of ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue Relations and the 5th Anniversary of the Strategic Partnership, we looked forward to enhancing cooperation under the new ASEAN-U.S. Plan of Action (2021-2025), as well as the possible reconvening of the ASEAN-U.S. Special Summit, to celebrate this milestone when situation allows.
3. We recognised the unprecedented challenges posed by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and underscored the importance of enhanced international collaboration in addressing the challenges, as well as in strengthening joint efforts for a robust pandemic recovery and other public health emergencies. In this regard, we underlined the importance of joint collaboration in developing and facilitating access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines to all, as well as maintaining resilient, open and connected supply chains and supporting a sustained economic recovery of the region. We encouraged the timely sharing of information when needed to prepare for or respond to potential pandemic or epidemic threats.
4. We reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN-U.S. cooperation in mitigating the impact of COVID-19, and welcomed the successful convening of the ASEAN-U.S. High-level Interagency Videoconference on Public Health Emergencies, the Special ASEAN-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 as well as the Special Videoconference of ASEAN-U.S. Health Ministers in April 2020. ASEAN Leaders welcomed the U.S.' expression to support ASEAN, including through the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures Alumni Network as part of the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures initiative, and its plans to support ASEAN's development of the ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination System as well as to expand its official engagement in the health sector. ASEAN Leaders welcomed the U.S.' pledging of over USD 87 million in COVID-19 related assistance to ASEAN Member States. ASEAN Leaders looked forward to the U.S.' support of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, the ASEAN Regional Reserves of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies, as well as the U.S.' support for the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan.

5. We reiterated our shared commitment to support ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the evolving regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based. ASEAN Leaders reiterated the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which is based on the principles of, among others, strengthening ASEAN Centrality, openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention, complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks, equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit, and respect for international law. ASEAN Member States encouraged the U.S. to work with ASEAN in promoting the AOIP and undertaking cooperation on the key areas of cooperation identified in the Outlook to enhance mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit through ASEAN-led mechanisms.
6. ASEAN Leaders welcomed the U.S.' continued support for and active participation in various ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus, and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) as well as the ASEAN Plus United States of America Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC+U.S.) Consultation and other meetings.
7. We reaffirmed our commitment to deepening ASEAN-U.S. economic ties, including through the implementation of the ASEAN-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement (TIFA) as well as USAID's Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation, Trade and E-Commerce (IGNITE) programme, which helps strengthen the enabling environment for cross-border trade, spurs e-commerce, and increases productivity in the region. We noted the ongoing work of IGNITE to support the development of the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) and efforts to link the ASW with the United States Customs and Border Protection's Automated Customs Environment to further facilitate two-way trade between our countries. We also appreciated the work of the US-ASEAN Business Council (USABC) in promoting stronger ties between both sides' business communities, including through the development of the e-commerce ecosystem in ASEAN as well as youth development through the US-ASEAN Internship Programme. We welcomed the successful third Indo-Pacific Business Forum, co-hosted by the U.S. and 2020 ASEAN Chair Viet Nam, which brought together business and government leaders across the Indo-Pacific region to spur economic innovation and collaboration. We also welcomed the U.S.' Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (ASIA EDGE) initiative, to be in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (APAEC) Phase II, that seeks to strengthen energy security and energy access across the Indo-Pacific.
8. ASEAN Leaders encouraged the continued U.S.' support for enhanced regional connectivity and ASEAN's digital transformation through the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025) and looked forward to exploring synergies between the MPAC 2025 and U.S. initiatives supporting connectivity, in line with the "Connecting the Connectivities" approach. We welcomed for the U.S.' continued engagement of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) through activities under the US-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership (USASCP) initiative. We looked forward to further activities under the USASCP, including workshops, sharing of best practices, development of pilot projects, and private sector engagements, among others, in support of smart city development in ASEAN. We welcomed the efforts to support ASEAN's cybersecurity capacity with a range of ASEAN partners through the U.S.-ASEAN Connect Digital Economy Series and look forward to further capacity building exercises. We welcomed opportunities of future collaboration on the Blue Dot Network initiative to promote quality infrastructure development.

9. ASEAN Leaders welcomed the support of the U.S. through the ASEAN-USAID Partnership for Regional Optimization within the Political-Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT) programme, including in good governance, rule of law, human rights, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief, as well as in combating non-traditional security challenges. We noted with appreciation the U.S. support, through ASEAN-USAID PROSPECT, to the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and affirmed the importance of sharing experience and lessons learned between ASEAN and the U.S. on various human rights issues to further enhance human rights promotion and protection in the region as well as capacity building in this area. We also encouraged the U.S. to consider providing financial and technical support for ARMAC's operation and activities in order to help promote the awareness of the danger of mine and explosive remnants of war in the region and beyond.
10. We noted the progress in developing an ASEAN gender mainstreaming strategy that would provide guidance on integrating gender perspectives in the work of all sectoral bodies in the three ASEAN Community pillars. We welcomed opportunities to strengthen our collaboration on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda with a view to promoting women's meaningful participation in peace and security in the region, including through USAID's work on helping ASEAN develop a regional work plan on WPS. We welcomed the U.S.' proposal for the EAS Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security to be adopted at the 15th EAS in this regard. We recognised the need to strengthen resilience and capacity in the area of cybersecurity, including through the implementation of the ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation adopted in November 2018 and the ASEAN-U.S. Cyber Policy Dialogue.
11. ASEAN Leaders appreciated the U.S.' support in building a more people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community through various capacity building and development programmes. We took note that initiatives such as the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), including the YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam, the Billion Futures Scholars framework to build on the over 500,000 ASEAN students who have studied in the United States in the last 10 years and that will support even more ASEAN students interested in U.S. study opportunities, the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme, the U.S.-ASEAN Internship Programme, the ASEAN-U.S. Science Prize for Women and the Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Scholar Program remain essential in contributing towards human capital development in the region and in enhancing people-to-people connectivity. ASEAN Leaders also encouraged the U.S. to partner with ASEAN in the newly established ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council. We are pleased to adopt the ASEAN-U.S. Joint Statement on Human Capital Development, which will the pave way for further collaboration in further advancing human capital development in the region.
12. We shared the significance of development cooperation provided by the U.S in support of ASEAN's Community-building efforts. In this regard, we welcomed the recent signing of the Regional Development Cooperation Agreement (RDCA) between ASEAN and the USAID, which underscores the U.S. commitment to regional development and shared goals of regional integration and rules-based governance to promote peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN encompasses all ongoing USAID's programmes.
13. ASEAN Leaders also appreciated the U.S.' continued support in narrowing the development gap among ASEAN Member States through the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025). We welcomed the U.S.' efforts to further support ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gap and promoting sustainable and equitable development across the ASEAN Community including through aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN.

14. We welcomed the launch of the Mekong-U.S. Partnership and affirmed the important role of the Mekong sub-region in ASEAN Community-building. We noted that the Partnership builds on eleven years of successful cooperation under the Lower Mekong Initiative where Mekong region countries and the U.S. can work together to address challenges and shared interests.
15. We committed to continue our close cooperation to counter a variety of shared challenges, including terrorism and trafficking in people, wildlife, and narcotics. We noted the ongoing efforts to strengthen border security in order to counter foreign terrorist fighter travel and other transnational threats.
16. We discussed international issues of common interest and concern. We stressed the importance of and urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace, stability and denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the Leaders of the U.S. and DPRK. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. We reiterated the role of ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.
17. 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 serious 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 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 are to 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.