

# 2021 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 54TH ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

*Adopted on 2 August 2021*

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## 2021 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 54TH ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

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1. The 54<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 via videoconference. The Meeting was chaired by Brunei Darussalam under the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper." We reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to care for its people and prepare for future opportunities and challenges, in order to advance sustainable development for shared prosperity in the region.

### **ASEAN COMMUNITY BUILDING**

#### ASEAN Community Vision 2025

2. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen the ASEAN Community as well as ASEAN's unity and Centrality to address common challenges as well as to advance ASEAN's comprehensive recovery from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We recognized the importance of promoting an ASEAN identity and awareness among its peoples, and that the strength of the ASEAN Community lies in putting people at its centre and fulfilling their desire to live in a region of lasting peace, security, and stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity, and social progress. In this regard, we reaffirmed ASEAN Member States' common values and principles, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter.
3. We reaffirmed our commitment towards the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 as well as to develop the Post-2025 Community Vision, including establishing a High-Level Task Force and developing a Roadmap for the development of the Post-2025 Vision. Amidst the unprecedented challenges and socio-economic impacts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we commended the ongoing work of all ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Organs for progress achieved in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprints 2025, as well as the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. We welcomed the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the three ASEAN Community Blueprints and MPAC 2025, and the implementation of their recommendations to ensure their full completion.
4. We reaffirmed our shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security, and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
5. We reaffirmed our belief that regionalism and multilateralism are important principles and frameworks of cooperation, and that their strength and value lie in their inclusivity, rules-based nature and emphasis on mutual benefit and respect.
6. We remain determined to continue promoting ASEAN identity and awareness among its peoples and enhancing ASEAN's visibility through, including but not limited to, promoting the display of the ASEAN Flag in ASEAN Member States and the use of the ASEAN Anthem at all ASEAN official functions.

### Key Deliverables

7. We highlighted the importance of a whole-of-ASEAN approach in pursuing our Community building efforts and agreed on the need for ASEAN to pursue a Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD) across the three ASEAN Community Pillars, with a view to better protect the society, economy and the broader developmental agenda, as well as to enable a strategic, holistic, coordinated and cross-pillar response in mitigating impacts of emergencies and disasters that have or may affect the Southeast Asian region. We therefore look forward to the submission of the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the ASEAN Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters to the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit.
8. We welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Village in Palu City in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, as part of ASEAN's post-disaster recovery project, with the support of the people of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of the Philippines, the Government of Australia and Direct Relief, through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), following the natural disasters that occurred in 2018. The construction of the ASEAN Village demonstrates the importance of ASEAN solidarity through a coordinated multi stakeholder and holistic approach to disasters and emergencies. This initiative exemplifies the essence of "One ASEAN One Response" and the intent of the ASEAN SHIELD.
9. We agreed on the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation to effectively address current as well as emerging global and regional challenges of common concern and areas of mutual interest. We therefore welcomed the ASEAN Chair's proposal to prepare an ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Upholding Multilateralism in 2021 for the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to upholding and promoting multilateral cooperation, anchored in international law, towards achieving peace, security, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.
10. We acknowledged the emerging significance of the blue economy as well as the growing interest from external partners to engage ASEAN Member States on the concept, both bilaterally and regionally. To this end, we welcomed the convening of the ASEAN Workshop on the Blue Economy, which promoted a common understanding of the concept for the region and identified the potential areas of cooperation under it, where ASEAN Member States can engage each other as well as external partners. To this end, we looked forward to continuing discussions on this issue, with a view to submitting a proposed ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy for the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit's consideration.
11. Recognizing the increasing pace of digital transformation in our region, especially amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the accelerated adoption of digital technologies in our economies and societies, we welcomed the progress in the development of the Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) for ASEAN and looked forward to its submission to the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, for consideration.
12. We recognized the need to ensure sustainability and progress in ASEAN's work through equipping junior officers of ASEAN Member States with the knowledge and skills to face new challenges. To this end, we welcomed the proposed establishment of a Junior Fellowship Programme with the ASEAN Secretariat to enhance familiarization with the work of ASEAN, develop skilled officers, enable networking and strengthen the sense of ASEAN identity.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

13. We remained deeply concerned with the continued human cost and suffering as well as profound socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, and acknowledged the ongoing whole-of-government efforts of ASEAN Member States as well as a whole-of-Community approach by ASEAN in advancing its collective efforts to respond to COVID-19 and recover swiftly. We further noted the important coordinating role of the ACC and the active work of the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE), as well as the work of the ASEAN health sectoral body and other relevant sectoral bodies, which demonstrates ASEAN's solidarity and ability to address unprecedented challenges of the pandemic in a coordinated multi-sectoral, cross-pillar and multi-stakeholder manner.
14. We welcomed the progress made in implementing the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan, which serves as a consolidated strategy for ASEAN to emerge more resilient and stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcomed the establishment of the ACRF Support Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat. We encouraged the continued support and contribution from all stakeholders, both internal and external, private and public, for the effective implementation of the ACRF. In this regard, we underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN's cooperation with external partners and international organisations to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.
15. We welcomed the continued contributions from ASEAN Member States and external partners to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund which now has pledged contributions amounting to USD 20.8 million. We also welcomed the utilization of the Fund to procure COVID-19 vaccines for the peoples of ASEAN and ASEAN Secretariat staff through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in order to help ensure that the people of ASEAN are vaccinated, as "no one is safe until everyone is safe".
16. We looked forward to the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (RRMS) to enhance regional resilience in response to medical emergencies and welcomed the contribution of medical supplies by ASEAN Member States, ASEAN external partners, international organisations, and other sources.
17. We looked forward to the implementation of the Regional Strategic and Action Plan on ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance (AVSSR) 2021-2025 towards realizing vaccine security and self-reliance for all in ASEAN.
18. Noting the need to enhance vaccine production and distribution in the region, we called for enhanced collaboration and sharing of experience with ASEAN's partners in research, development, production, and distribution of vaccines, providing equitable access to medicines for COVID-19, making COVID-19 vaccines available and affordable to all as global public goods, as well as preparing for other future public health emergencies.
19. We looked forward to the timely establishment and early operationalization of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), which would serve as a centre of excellence and regional resource hub to strengthen ASEAN's regional capabilities to prepare for, prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies and emerging diseases. In this regard, we appreciated and welcomed the support from Japan and Australia towards the ACPHEED, while encouraging other external partners to support its operationalization.

20. We encouraged the maintenance of necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating, to the extent possible, the essential movement of people, including business travels, while safeguarding public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic. In this regard, we welcomed the development of the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF) and commended the work of the Ad Hoc Task Force on the Operationalization of the ATCAF. We looked forward to the early operationalization of the ATCAF, following its adoption by the ACC.

#### Review of the Implementation of the ASEAN Charter

21. We took note of the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR), assisted by the ASEAN Secretariat on the follow-up of the Scoping Report and looked forward to the Review of Implementation of the ASEAN Charter. We noted that the review exercise is aimed at identifying outstanding issues in the implementation of the ASEAN Charter and the necessary steps in ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of the ASEAN system, and tasked the CPR to work expeditiously on the Review for submission to the ACC.

#### Initiative for ASEAN Integration

22. We underscored the importance of narrowing the development gap within and among ASEAN Member States and enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a region. In this regard, we welcomed the progress made from the first year of the implementation of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025), which guides our collective efforts to narrow the development gap within ASEAN and between ASEAN and the rest of the world, and to enhance ASEAN's competitiveness as a region, taking into consideration emerging challenges and priorities, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We noted the ongoing discussion on the concept note on the development indicators and classifications to achieve decent living standards and narrow the development gaps in ASEAN, and welcomed the role of IAI Task Force in facilitating this process.

#### Sub-regional cooperation

23. We emphasized the importance of ASEAN Centrality and unity in promoting ASEAN's sub-regional development. We recognized the relevance of subregional development to ASEAN's regional integration and community-building process, especially in narrowing the development gap and enhancing ASEAN's regional competitiveness, enhancing regional connectivity, and ensuring ASEAN's sustainable development and inclusive development. We encouraged closer coordination between ASEAN sectoral bodies and subregional cooperation frameworks in achieving our goal of narrowing the development gap among and within ASEAN Member States. In this regard, we welcomed the upcoming ASEAN Forum on Sub-regional Cooperation: Narrowing the Development Gaps in Sub-Regions for Comprehensive Recovery and Sustainable Development to be held in Viet Nam in the third quarter of 2021.
24. We reiterated the commitment to further promote equitable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning sub-regional growth, including in the Mekong area such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Indonesia-Malaysia Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), and the Singapore-Johor-Riau (SIJORI) Growth Triangle with the comprehensive development of ASEAN. We welcomed the support by external partners in the relevant processes.

### ASEAN Connectivity

25. We welcomed the progress in implementing the MPAC 2025 which helps in achieving sustainable development and supporting post-pandemic recovery efforts as we strive towards a seamlessly and comprehensively connected and integrated ASEAN. We also welcomed the commencement of the Assessment of Future Sustainable Infrastructure Trends and Priorities in a Post-Pandemic ASEAN and the convening of the Socialisation Forum on the Framework for Improving ASEAN Infrastructure Productivity in May 2021. We looked forward to the operationalization of the MTR of MPAC 2025 recommendations to enhance implementation at the regional and national levels.
26. We acknowledged the importance of partnerships in mobilizing resources to implement MPAC 2025 and promote greater synergies amongst various connectivity strategies, including through the Connecting the Connectivities approach. In this regard, we noted the key recommendations of the Seminar on “Connecting the Connectivities: Synergy through Enhanced Partnership” which was held in January 2021.

### Promoting Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

27. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing sustainable development cooperation, including with partners, by promoting the Complementarities Initiative. We reiterated our continued support for the effective implementation of the Complementarities Roadmap (2020-2025) and for the work of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD). We acknowledged the outcomes of the 5<sup>th</sup> High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue (HLBD), which recognized that sustainable development and sustainability is essential in mitigating the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and building a better and more resilient future. We encouraged the acceleration of efforts to deliver the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in view of the Decade of Action for the SDGs and the reversal in the progress of achievement of the SDGs particularly on poverty (Goal 1) and inequality (Goal 10) caused by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcomed a new economic model that is restorative and regenerative by design, and in this regard, welcomed the endorsement of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Network, which is expected to contribute to greater competitive, efficient and resilient ASEAN.

### ASEAN Smart Cities Network

28. We emphasized the importance of ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) as a platform for catalyzing cooperation in smart and sustainable cities development in the region through technological and innovative solutions. Recognizing the crucial role of cities and urban innovation in the region’s post-pandemic recovery, we encouraged synergizing the ASCN’s efforts with other on-going urban initiatives, such as the ASEAN Sustainable Strategy (ASUS) under MPAC 2025. We welcomed the work of ASCN in developing an online portal and a smart city investment toolkit towards strengthening partnerships in delivering smart city projects, sharing of good practices, and bridging resource gaps. We also welcomed Dialogue Partners and other external partners to continue their active engagement with ASCN, in accordance with the Guidelines for ASCN’s Engagement with External Partners.

### ASEAN Secretariat

29. We noted that the new ASEAN Secretariat Building, since its full operationalization, has hosted an increasing number of meetings including the ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting on 24 April 2021. We looked forward to the optimization of the use of ASEAN Secretariat facilities for hosting

meetings. In this regard, we encouraged Chairs of ASEAN and ASEAN sectoral bodies to conduct ASEAN meetings at the ASEAN Secretariat, in accordance with the Modalities for Chair of ASEAN and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to Host Meetings at the ASEAN Secretariat. We also acknowledged the importance of strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat's cross-pillar institutional capacity and provision of policy support to the ASEAN Community-building process, and therefore welcomed the initiative to Strengthen the Analysis and Monitoring Function of the ASEAN Secretariat.

## **ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY**

### Implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025

30. We welcomed the final Report of the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025 MTR and were encouraged that the majority of the activities undertaken in the implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025, thus far, had medium to high impact on ASEAN Community building, and 80% of the activities were expected to be sustained in the future. We expressed our satisfaction with the encouraging progress made with 97% of the action lines in the APSC Blueprint 2025 having been acted upon. We acknowledged the Report's suggestions to include in the monitoring of the progress of ASEAN Political Security Community building emerging issues such as but not limited to the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP); ASEAN's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic; developments in cybersecurity; and Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

### Non-Traditional Security Threats

#### Terrorism and Violent Extremism

31. Recognizing the importance of a collective and comprehensive approach to address terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism and radicalization, we expressed our continued support for the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (PoA PCRVE) 2018-2025 and encouraged the continued implementation of the Work Plan of the PoA PCRVE (Bali Work Plan) 2019-2025 through crosssectoral and cross-pillar cooperation by all relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies/Organs/Entities, as well as Dialogue Partners and External Parties.

#### Illicit Drugs

32. We reiterated the importance of cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination to combat illicit drug activities in the region and reaffirmed our commitment towards a drug-free ASEAN and a zero-tolerance approach towards illicit drugs. We stressed the importance of implementing the ASEAN Work Plan in Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 (ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2025) and noted with appreciation the progress of the ongoing Mid-Term Review of ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2025.

#### Trafficking in Persons

33. We reaffirmed our collective commitment to combating trafficking in persons in a more holistic manner through cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination. We noted progress in the implementation of the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan (2017-2020), which involved nine ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, and looked forward to the final review of the Work Plan and its way forward.



34. We expressed concern over the irregular movement of persons in the Southeast Asia region. We noted that criminal groups had taken advantage of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to exploit vulnerable groups. We acknowledged the close connection between irregular movement of persons, trafficking in persons, and smuggling of migrants. We reaffirmed the need for ASEAN Member States' coordinated responses in addressing the issues of trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and related transnational crime, including irregular movement of persons.

#### Cybersecurity

35. We welcomed the progress in ASEAN cybersecurity cooperation and reaffirmed our commitment to building an open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful ICT environment in ASEAN in view of the rapidly growing threats in the cyber sphere. Noting the transboundary and crosscutting nature of cybersecurity, we welcomed the establishment of the crosssectoral and cross-pillar ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC), which held its Inaugural Meeting in November 2020 and welcomed the proposal to develop a Regional Action Plan on the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace to facilitate ASEAN Member States in prioritizing the implementation of the 11 norms based on their readiness and interests. We recognized the role of cybersecurity activities and training programmes of the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) in Singapore and the ASEAN Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) in Bangkok in complementing existing ASEAN efforts in cybersecurity capacity building.

#### Peace and Security

36. We reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct in governing inter-state relations in the region and as a foundation for maintaining regional peace and stability. We remain committed to further promoting the principles embodied in the TAC and emphasized the importance of all High Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Treaty. We looked forward to the accession of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates to the TAC. We also welcomed the growing interest of non-regional countries to accede to the TAC, on the basis of respect for and in conformity with the purposes and principles of the TAC.
37. We congratulated the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) on the occasion of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and in this regard, welcomed the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration in Commemoration of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADMM Towards A Future-Ready, Peaceful and Prosperous ASEAN and the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration by the ADMM-Plus in Commemoration of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADMM on Promoting A Future-Ready, Peaceful and Prosperous ASEAN. We were pleased to observe further progress in ASEAN defence cooperation. We looked forward to the contribution of the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network (ACDN) and the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE) in safeguarding our cyber space. The ACDN aims to link the cyber defence operation centres of ASEAN Member States to promote and enhance a secure and resilient cyber space through greater collaboration. The ACICE will strengthen cooperation between defence establishments against disinformation and misinformation. We noted that the ADMM recently performed a stocktaking exercise and adopted the Concept Paper on ADMM's External Engagements, which are aimed at affirming ASEAN Centrality and strengthening the working processes in the defence sector. We commended the decision of the Post-Implementation Review of the annualization of the ADMM-Plus to continue the annual convening of the ADMM-Plus which underscores the importance of ADMM and ADMM-Plus as the region's main multilateral

platforms for practical defence and security cooperation and strategic dialogue. We also commended the ADMM-Plus commitment to maintain ASEAN's leading role in the shaping of regional security architecture. We acknowledged the defence sector's continued commitment and contribution to ASEAN's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM), the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defence Experts and the ASEAN Military Medicine Conference (AMMC).

38. We noted the development of ASEAN cooperation on law and legal matters, undertaken by the ASEAN Law Ministers' Meeting (ALAWMM) and the ASEAN Senior Law Officials' Meeting (ASLOM) in supporting the ASEAN Community building agenda and strengthening a rules-based ASEAN. We also welcomed the finalization of the Terms of Reference of the ASLOM Working Group on ASEAN Extradition Treaty and looked forward to the progress on the development of an ASEAN Extradition Treaty.
39. We looked forward to the 1<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (SOM-MLAT) to be convened by Brunei Darussalam in the last quarter of 2021 to discuss various issues in ensuring the effective implementation of the MLAT and strengthening the AMS capacity to combat transnational crimes.
40. We welcomed the outcomes of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meetings of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) in November 2020 and July 2021 respectively, that discussed ways to enhance cooperation among the nuclear regulatory bodies and further strengthen nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in the region. We also welcomed the progress of the implementation of the Practical Arrangements (PA) between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards, signed in September 2019 through the convening of relevant activities and initiatives.
41. We reiterated our commitment to preserve the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter. We stressed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including through implementing the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the Treaty on the SEANWFZ (2018-2022). We reaffirmed our commitment to continuously engage the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and intensify the ongoing efforts of all parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty. Our ASEAN experts could explore ways to bridge the differences, including the possibility of engaging with the NWS experts. We look forward to the submission of the biennial SEANWFZ Resolution through the First Committee to the 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
42. We noted ASEAN-IPR's activities with relevant ASEAN Bodies' and ASEAN External Partners to promote the culture of peace and moderation in ASEAN. We encouraged the ASEAN-IPR to find innovative solutions to ensure its sustainability and activities. We also noted ASEAN-IPR's continued support for ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) to implement the ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security.
43. We welcomed ASEAN's efforts in promoting and empowering women's participation and leading roles in peace and security in the region, particularly the launch of the ASEAN Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security. The Regional Study reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to gender equality, women's leadership, and women's role and participation in implementing the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. We noted the role of the ASEAN

Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) in the development of an ASEAN regional plan of action on the WPS Agenda, and looked forward to the implementation of the other recommendations of the Regional Study by other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, where appropriate. We noted Member States' initiative to promote the WPS Agenda in the region through the support of the Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators in convening the Regional Forum of Women Peace Mediators and Negotiators in June 2021.

44. We commended the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) as a centre of excellence in promoting ASEAN's efforts to address the issue of explosive remnants of war (ERW) for interested ASEAN Member States and raise awareness of the danger of ERW among affected communities. We welcomed the convening of ARMAC's hybrid workshop on "Achieving Sustainable and Inclusive Development in Landmine/ERW Affected Countries" in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in July 2021.

#### Maritime Cooperation

45. We noted the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/239 emphasizing in the Preamble, the universal and unified character of the 1982 UNCLOS, and reaffirming that the Convention sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector, and that its integrity needs to be maintained.
46. We welcomed positive developments in maritime cooperation among ASEAN Member States, including through continued constructive dialogues on issues of common interest and concern under the ambit of ASEAN-led mechanisms. We encouraged ASEAN Member States to intensify cooperation in promoting maritime security, safety and freedom of navigation and overflight, addressing transnational crime at sea, creating conducive environment for peaceful settlement of disputes, ensuring marine sustainability, providing humanitarian assistance to persons and vessels in distress at sea, combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, promoting maritime connectivity and commerce, strengthening marine scientific research, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
47. We noted with satisfaction the successful convening of the 10th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and 8<sup>th</sup> Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) held in December 2020, and reaffirmed the role of the AMF and EAMF in promoting maritime cooperation in the region through dialogue and consultation. Taking into account the cross-cutting nature of maritime cooperation, we encouraged stronger coordination among ASEAN cross-sectoral bodies and other relevant ASEAN mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts.

#### Human Rights

48. We congratulated the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on its progress and achievements in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in the implementation of its Priority Programmes/Activities over the past years on human rights, including in areas such as women, children and persons with disabilities, as well as migrant workers. AICHR's work in the context of public health and recovery response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially its consideration for the needs of the vulnerable groups, was highly commendable. We also appreciated the AICHR's efforts to remain responsive and adaptive in rolling out its priority programmes strategically focused on human rights and other

cross-sectoral issues. We tasked our Senior Officials to continue working on the implementation of the decision made by the 52<sup>nd</sup> AMM on AICHR and looked forward to the establishment of the Panel of Experts. We noted the proposal from AICHR to hold an ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2021 in September 2021.

49. We noted the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for tracking implementation progress of the AICHR's Five-Year Work Plan 2021-2025. Moving forward, we encouraged the AICHR to continue its efforts to fully and effectively discharge its mandate and functions, particularly in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN, and to reinforce its cooperation with external partners and regional entities while retaining its public outreach and communications through the AICHR website and social media to engage all members of society in contributing to the building of a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community.

### **ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY**

#### Priority Economic Deliverables

50. We expressed our commitment to support the timely realization of Brunei Darussalam's Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) under the AEC Pillar, which are divided into three strategic thrusts of Recovery, Digitalisation, and Sustainability. We remain confident that, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN would not be deterred from realizing these PEDs as targeted.
51. We are encouraged by the forward-looking development of the PED on the development of the Work Plan on the Implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on E-Commerce 2021-2025, which aims to advance effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on E-Commerce over the next five years both at regional and national levels, thus paving the way for ASEAN to transform itself into a leading digital community. We also looked forward to the complete ratification, and timely entry into force of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce. We reiterated the importance of finalizing the Regional Action Plan on the Implementation of the Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace to enable ASEAN to be forward looking in this emerging area.
52. We also supported the PED on Circular Economy that is geared towards the achievement of a resilient economy, resource efficiency, and sustainable growth in the region. We noted the development of the Framework for Circular Economy for the AEC, which aims to provide clear and strategic direction to the AEC work on circular economy, and look forward to its adoption later this year. We noted how potential areas of cooperation on sustainable development and clean and renewable energy, among others, can complement the AEC work on the circular economy. We also looked forward to the PEDs specific to advancing ASEAN energy and minerals cooperation that seek to respond to the emerging opportunities and challenges of ASEAN's continuing efforts towards energy security and energy transitions in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) 2016-2025, including through cooperation with the ASEAN Centre for Energy as well as the responsible development of the region's mineral resources amidst the increasing intensity of minerals demanded by the modern digital age, low carbon recovery and growth, and sustainable development in accordance with ASEAN Minerals Cooperation Action Plan (AMCAP) 2016-2025. Towards accelerating energy transition and strengthening energy resilience, we were pleased to note the positive progress made in the implementation of the APAEC Phase II 2021-2025. To highlight the regional energy transitions and energy security agenda, we looked forward to the adoption of the Joint Declaration on Energy Security and Energy Transition.

### Tourism

53. We commended the tremendous efforts by ASEAN tourism sector in implementing creative and innovative solutions, such as utilizing digital technology, to aid the tourism sector's resilience amidst the pandemic and to ensure that the tourism sector is responsive and can be safely reopened. We look forward to the implementation of the Post-COVID19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism as one of the PEDs. We also noted with appreciation the development of an ASEAN Guidelines for Hygiene and Safety for Workers and Communities in the Tourism Industry as part of the ACRF to instill trust and confidence in the resumption of travel to Southeast Asia. These initiatives would help rebuild the ASEAN tourism industry, a major driver for regional economic growth and social advancement, to be more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

### AEC Mid-term Review

54. We welcomed the launch of the Report of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 and are pleased to note the good progress made in the implementation of the 23 sectoral work plans in the Blueprint. Acknowledging the significant contribution of the AEC to ASEAN's Community-building process, we look forward to the early and effective follow up by AEC sectoral bodies on the recommendations in the MTR as we enter the second phase towards achieving the AEC's 2025 goals.

### Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

55. We welcomed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement that was signed in November 2020 amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic. We recognized the significant contribution that the RCEP could make to the overall post-pandemic economic recovery, expansion of regional trade and investment, job creation, and inclusive global economic growth and development. We noted the progress of the preparatory work for the entry into force of the RCEP and looked forward to its completion. We reaffirmed our commitment to expedite respective domestic ratification procedures to have the RCEP Agreement enter into force as targeted in early 2022.

### Air Transport

56. We welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (AE CATA) at the Extraordinary ASEAN-EU Senior Transport Officials Meeting held on 2 June 2021, which would help bolster air connectivity and economic development between ASEAN and Europe. We also welcomed the adoption of the first set of ASEAN-wide COVID-19 operational guidelines by the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting held on 24 November 2020 for the protection and safety of passengers and operational air crew, as well as cleaning and disinfection of aircraft, aiming to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, restore passenger confidence, and support the safe resumption of aviation activities in ASEAN.

### Agriculture and Forestry

57. We noted that sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices, including sustainable production of vegetable oils, are essential to the attainment of the SDGs by 2030 and will contribute to the regional and global effort towards economic recovery and green growth. We welcomed the convening of the First Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Palm Oil between the European Union and Relevant ASEAN Member Countries to continue promoting mutual understanding on the sustainable production of vegetable oils and address

the challenges in this sector in a holistic, transparent, and nondiscriminatory manner. To this end, we reaffirmed our support for the relevant Member States to promote collaboration and sustainability efforts and practices in the vegetable oil sector.

58. We looked forward to the early establishment and operationalization of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ) to provide a comprehensive, integrated, and concerted regional approach that will coordinate national approaches in animal health and zoonoses measures.

#### Payment Connectivity

59. We also welcomed the launch of the Singapore-Thailand real time retail payment system cross-border linkage which is a tangible milestone for payments connectivity in supporting ASEAN's digitalization drive and enabling financial inclusion in the region. We look forward to further expanding this bilateral linkage into a network of linked retail payment systems across ASEAN.

### **ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY**

60. We reaffirmed our commitment to a people-oriented and people-centred Community that embodies an adaptive spirit of preparedness and resilience to build a peaceful, cohesive, caring and prosperous region, reflective of ASEAN's past commitments with renewed aspiration in consolidating and strengthening ASEAN's common goals. To this end, we looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Strategic Policy Framework on Promoting an Adaptive Community of Fostering Greater Understanding, Tolerance and a Sense of Regional Agendas among the Peoples of ASEAN at the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in October 2021. We welcomed the adoption of the Narrative of ASEAN Identity by the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2020, and agreed to actively promote the Narrative through relevant activities.

#### Social Welfare and Development

61. We reaffirmed our commitment to fostering cooperation in social welfare and development aimed at raising the standard of living, especially for the poor and vulnerable groups in ASEAN and seeking the active involvement of all sectors of society. In this regard, we noted the progress on the initiative of the ASEAN Outstanding Social Welfare and Development Awards (AOSWADA) by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) which will serve as a platform to foster sustained partnerships and cooperation among non-government organisations, civil society organisations, and the private sector in ASEAN.

#### Gender Mainstreaming

62. We reaffirmed our commitment to advocate gender equality and ensure meaningful participation of women and girls in the region's social and economic development. We welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Gender Outlook in March 2021.
63. We commended ASEAN's efforts and Member States' initiatives on women empowerment and the convening of the first ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit with the theme "Women's Role in Building a Cohesive, Dynamic, Sustainable, and Inclusive ASEAN Community in a Post-COVID-19 World" in November 2020. We also commended the continued efforts and contributions of the ASEAN Women's Entrepreneur Network (AWEN) in strengthening entrepreneurship capacities and skills for women in ASEAN.

### Education

64. We noted with appreciation the recent adoption of the ASEAN Workplan on Education 2021-2025, and look forward to its implementation, which reaffirms the principles of quality, equity and inclusion in education and is anchored on a lifelong learning framework encompassing different stages and modalities of education and catering to the needs and contexts of all learners. We also reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to collectively improve access to digital connectivity and skills to support teaching and learning, and to ensure inclusion and equity, harness partnerships with the private sector, and empower children and young people to shape the digital transformation of education in the region.

### Human Resource Development

65. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council's Rules of Procedure and the finalization of its inaugural medium-term work plan to be noted at the 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit. We took note of the completion of the Regional Report on Human Resources Development Readiness in ASEAN and implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work.
66. We underlined the importance of strengthening labour market information in the region to promote more evidence-based policies. We were therefore pleased to note the data updating of the ASEAN Informal Employment Statistics and the first data collection for the monitoring framework of the ASEAN Roadmap on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025. We further noted the completion of the Regional Study on Labour Productivity in ASEAN launched in February 2021, which led to the exploration of the establishment of a regional labour productivity index for ASEAN.

### Youth and Sport Development

67. We looked forward to the establishment of the ASEAN Youth Academy in Brunei Darussalam as an institution dedicated to the youth of ASEAN that enables knowledge exchange and skills development through hands-on experience and direct interaction with ASEAN officials and experts. We noted with satisfaction the completion of the study on ASEAN Awareness, Values and Identity in the context of the fifth domain of the ASEAN Youth Development Index and looked forward to the launch of the report by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY).
68. We congratulated the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS) for the adoption of Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Technical Working Group for the Preparation of ASEAN's Joint Bid for the FIFA World Cup 2034 (TWG-FWC) and looked forward to the convening of its first meeting. We also welcomed the potential expansion of sports sectoral cooperation with our Dialogue Partners. In reaffirming our commitment to promoting the protection of the integrity of sport by preventing doping and promoting a commitment to the concepts of ethics in sports and fair play, we also looked forward to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

### Environment and Transboundary Haze Pollution

69. We underscored our resolve and commitment towards building a resilient community with the capability and capacity to adapt and tackle climate change. We reaffirmed our commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances. In this regard, we look forward to the 26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom.

70. We recognized the potential interlinkages between biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and zoonosis, and committed to using the momentum to engage relevant sectoral bodies to integrate biodiversity into responding to COVID-19 and preventing future public health emergencies and pandemics. We noted a series of initiatives and programs coordinated by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), including effectively managing protected areas, improving species conservation, enhancing ecosystem restoration, and promoting natural capital integration. We affirmed our support to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and endeavored to promote the restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems resources through the ASEAN Green Initiative with the planting of 10 million trees in the region in 10 years beginning in 2021. We looked forward to the launch of the Investing in Sustainable Natural Capital in ASEAN Status Report this year, which will be the basis for developing an ASEAN Natural Capital Roadmap.
71. We noted the enhanced regional cooperation in addressing transboundary issues such as marine litter and haze pollution control. We encouraged enhanced regional cooperation to address marine debris, and welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021–2025) which provides specific policy and programme recommendations to tackle marine plastic debris.
72. We noted that transboundary haze pollution, arising from land and forest fires remains a major concern in the region. We reiterated our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) and the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation to achieve a Haze-Free ASEAN. We commended the progress of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS 2006-2020) and welcomed the commencement of the formulation of the next APMS. We note the ongoing Final Review of the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation Towards Transboundary Haze Pollution with Means of Implementation and look forward to receiving its recommendations. We are also pleased to note the progress of the haze and peatland programmes/projects, namely: Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN (SUPA) and Measurable Action for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA). We noted the progress towards the finalization of the Establishment Agreement and Host Country Agreement of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACCTHPC) and looked forward to its operationalization, which will facilitate faster and effective implementation of all aspects of AATHP to address transboundary haze pollution in the ASEAN region. We stressed the importance of remaining vigilant and noted the ongoing preventive efforts to minimize any possible occurrence of transboundary smoke haze during periods of drier weather. We looked forward to the final reviews of the APMS and the Roadmap to evaluate the achievement of a haze-free ASEAN.

#### Disaster Management and Emergency Response

73. We welcomed the launch and the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025 and to advance ASEAN's priorities and capabilities in managing disasters in the region and realize ASEAN's aspiration to be a global leader in disaster management by 2025 as set in the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. We noted the ongoing review of the Financial Rules of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Response (ADMER) Fund to enhance ASEAN's disaster funding and resource mobilization mechanisms by looking beyond traditional funding sources to establish a self-sufficient fund, such as the potential establishment of a suitable platform for members of the public to contribute towards ASEAN's disaster response efforts. We looked forward to the adoption and launching of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Adaptation to Drought 2021-2025 to implement the ASEAN Declaration on the Strengthening of Adaptation to Drought adopted on 17 November 2020. We noted the importance of Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) Regional



Warehouse and Satellite Warehouses in disaster management. We reaffirmed the importance of promoting a whole-of-ASEAN approach in disaster management, including through strengthening the Joint Task Force to Promote Synergy with other Relevant ASEAN Bodies on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (JTF on HADR). We reaffirmed our commitment to continuously enhance ASEAN's capacity in implementing the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response through supporting the AHA Centre, and appreciated the work of the AHA Centre.

74. We reaffirmed our support for a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar by providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process, and promoting sustainable development in Rakhine State. We stressed the importance of the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure, and dignified manner, in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh. We further underscored the importance of efforts to addressing the root causes of the conflict in Rakhine State. We reiterated our appreciation to the Secretary-General of ASEAN for his efforts in leading the implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) which has been making progress. We appreciated the contribution from ASEAN Member States and some external partners in supporting ASEAN activities, including the prioritised projects in Rakhine State to facilitate the repatriation process and to promote inclusive and sustainable development, including through providing basic services and creating livelihood opportunities for the displaced persons. We also looked forward to the conduct of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) when conditions allow and encouraged the Secretary-General of ASEAN to continue identifying possible areas for ASEAN to effectively facilitate the repatriation process.

#### **ASEAN EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

75. We underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN Centrality and unity in our engagement with ASEAN's external partners, including through ASEAN led mechanisms such as the ASEAN-Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ADMM-Plus, in order to build mutual trust and confidence as well as reinforce an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre.
76. We noted with satisfaction the encouraging progress in ASEAN's relations with our Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, and Development Partners through the existing frameworks, Plans of Action, Practical Cooperation Areas, and development cooperation programmes based on mutual interest and benefit. We acknowledged with appreciation the contribution of these partnerships to our ASEAN Community-building and development cooperation efforts. We also welcomed the support of our partners for the priorities of ASEAN in 2021 under the theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper". We agreed to further strengthen partnerships and cooperation with our external partners, thus contributing to the continued efforts towards the realization of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and our proactive response to challenges, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and opportunities thereon.
77. We took note of the growing interest from countries and regional organisations outside of the region in developing stronger collaboration and substantial cooperation with ASEAN, including through applications for formal partnerships with ASEAN. We affirmed the importance of pursuing an outward-looking policy and agreed on the need to reach out to new potential partners based on shared interest, constructive engagement, and mutual benefit which could contribute to ASEAN's Community-building, regional integration and development cooperation efforts. We also welcomed the increased engagement between the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN and ASEAN's partners, including through the 95 Non-ASEAN

Ambassadors Accredited to ASEAN (NAAAs). We also welcomed the role of the 54 ASEAN Committees in Third Countries and International Organisations in promoting ASEAN's interest and forging partnerships in the respective host countries and international organisations.

78. We agreed to accord the United Kingdom the status of Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in view of its individual relationship with ASEAN as well as its past cooperation and engagement with ASEAN when it was a member of the European Union, in accordance with the Guidelines for ASEAN's External Relations (2014) and the List of Criteria for Dialogue Partnership (2021). We looked forward to the ASEAN Secretariat's recommendations on the modalities of engagement including arrangements on coordinatorship.
79. We agreed to commence a comprehensive review of the moratorium on new dialogue partnerships, in conjunction with the work of the ASEAN Community Vision Post-2025, with the objective to enhance the ASEAN Community and advance ASEAN's relations with external parties based on the principles of strengthening ASEAN Centrality, openness and inclusivity as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, the TAC and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

#### Dialogue Partners

80. We look forward to the convening of the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit, 22<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-Republic of Korea Summit, the 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit, the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.S. Summit and the 1<sup>st</sup> annual ASEAN-Australia Summit to be held in October 2021. We also look forward to the convening of the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Summit to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations, and the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Russia Summit to mark 30 years of ASEAN Russia relations and 25 years of Dialogue Partnership to be held in October 2021 back-to-back with the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits, and the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan of Action to Implement ASEAN-Russia Strategic Partnership (2021-2025).

#### ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partners and ASEAN Development Partners

81. We noted the good progress made in the ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, ASEAN Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, ASEAN-Germany Development Partnership, ASEAN-Chile Development Partnership as well as the ASEAN France Development Partnership and ASEAN-Italy Development Partnership. We welcomed the adoption of the Practical Cooperation Areas for ASEAN-Chile Development Partnership 2021-2025 and Practical Cooperation Areas for ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Partnership 2021-2025 and appreciated the ongoing support of these partnerships for ASEAN's Community-building efforts. In this regard, we look forward to the holding of the individual Trilateral Meetings between the ASEAN Chair, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and Norway, Switzerland and Turkey respectively to explore opportunities for further cooperation and exchanges on issues of mutual interest.

#### Regional and International Organisations

82. We reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism and underscored the importance of ASEAN's partnerships with other external partners such as regional and international organisations, including the United Nations to address global concerns, pursue shared goals and complementary initiatives, and promote sustainable development for the benefit of our people. In this connection, we welcomed the convening of the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-U.N. Summit held via videoconference in November 2020. We also welcomed the contribution of Viet Nam, as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, and took note of the convening of the High-level Open Debate on "Cooperation between UN and regional organisations in enhancing confidence-building and dialogue in conflict prevention and resolution" in April 2021.

83. We were pleased to note the positive progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2021-2025). We reaffirmed our commitment to intensifying cooperation in the implementation of the Complementarities Roadmap and effectively realizing the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### ASEAN Plus Three

84. We reaffirmed the importance of the APT cooperation framework in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the East Asian region. We underscored the need to further strengthen and deepen functional cooperation under the APT framework, which plays a key role in regional community building in East Asia, with ASEAN as the driving force. We agreed to further enhance APT cooperation in wide-ranging areas through the implementation of the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022 and the EAVG II Recommendations. In this regard, we looked forward to the development of a successor Work Plan (2023- 2027), which will serve as a principal guide in enhancing the APT process and identifying new areas of cooperation over the next five years. We were committed to further strengthening APT cooperation in response to emerging challenges and ensuring the effective implementation of the APT Leaders' Statement on Strengthening APT Cooperation for Economic and Financial Resilience in the face of Emerging Challenges which was adopted at the 23<sup>rd</sup> APT Summit in November 2020. We are committed to promoting APT cooperation in post-pandemic recovery, including by strengthening mental health cooperation in a post-COVID-19 era and in this regard, welcomed the proposed issuance of the APT Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on Mental Health Amongst Adolescents and Young Children at the 24<sup>th</sup> APT Summit in October 2021.

#### East Asia Summit

85. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening the EAS as a Leaders led forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability, and economic prosperity in the region. In this regard, we were committed to ensuring the effective follow-up on the Ha Noi Declaration on the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the East Asia Summit, which was adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in November 2020, to further strengthen the EAS process, sustain its strategic value and relevance as well as enhance its responsiveness to fast changing developments in the regional and global context. We agreed to further enhance EAS practical cooperation under the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative (2018-2022). We also looked forward to the development of a successor Plan of Action for the next five years (2023-2027), building on the existing Plan of Action's areas of cooperation, and current issues and challenges. We also highlighted the need to strengthen EAS collaboration, based on the principle of ASEAN Centrality, in response to emerging issues and challenges that affect peace, stability and prosperity in the region, as well as the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as mental health, and in facilitating a sustainable comprehensive recovery. In this regard, we welcomed the proposed issuance of the EAS Leaders Statements, namely the EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation, EAS Leaders' Statement on Economic Growth Through Tourism Recovery and the EAS Leaders' Statement on Green Recovery: Advancing Towards a Sustainable and Resilient Future, at the 16<sup>th</sup> EAS in October 2021. We welcomed the continued discussions and efforts to strengthen the EAS, including through, among others, the regular engagement of the EAS Ambassadors' Meeting in Jakarta to discuss implementation of the Leaders' decisions as well as exchanging information on regional development cooperation initiatives and security policies and initiatives, and discussions on the evolving regional architecture.

### ASEAN Regional Forum

86. We reiterated the importance of the ARF as a key platform for dialogue and consultation on regional political and security issues of common interest and concern. We noted with satisfaction the progress of cooperation in the ARF, and commended the provisional measures undertaken to ensure continuity of cooperation and operations of the ARF amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were pleased to note that the ARF has continued to further enhance its effectiveness and maintain its relevance in the evolving regional security architecture, including its work on cyber security and promoting the youth, peace and security agenda. In this regard, we encouraged follow-up actions to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the ARF based on the agreed Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol. We welcomed the implementation of the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) and looked forward to further discussions on developing a post-2025 vision for the ARF. We also looked forward to the adoption of the ARF Statement on Preventing and Combating Cybercrime and the ARF Joint Statement on Promoting the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at the ARF to be adopted during the 28<sup>th</sup> ARF.

### ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

87. We reaffirmed the objectives and principles of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which provides a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. We noted that various ASEAN sectoral bodies, ASEAN Political-Security Community and the ASEAN Economic Community pillars, had discussed the implementation of the Outlook. We further noted the ADMM-Plus' recognition of ASEAN's leading role in the shaping of regional economic and security architecture, by promoting close cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms, under the guiding principles reflected in the ASEAN Charter, the TAC, the Bali Principles, and reconfirmed in the AOIP. We agreed that ASEAN-led mechanisms, including ASEAN Plus One mechanisms, the EAS, the ADMM-Plus, and the ARF could serve as useful platforms for dialogue and cooperation to implement the Outlook. In this regard, we encouraged external partners to support and undertake cooperation with ASEAN, in accordance with the principles contained in the Outlook, on the four identified key areas, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN SDGs 2030, economic and other possible areas of cooperation, through practical projects to promote mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit through ASEAN-led mechanisms, thereby contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

### Timor-Leste's Application for ASEAN Membership

88. We noted the progress made in preparing for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillars (ASCC) Fact-Finding Missions (FFM) to Timor-Leste. We looked forward to the convening of the FFMs, when circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic allow, and to the outcomes of the FFMs, after which a comprehensive assessment of Timor Leste's application for ASEAN membership would be developed. In this regard, we welcomed the effort of the AEC and ASCC in moving this forward by holding virtual interfaces with Timor-Leste's sectoral counterparts to prepare for their FFMs. In line with the APSC FFM, we reaffirmed our commitment to continue exploring ways to provide capacity building assistance to Timor-Leste, especially through participation in non-policy making activities in ASEAN. In this regard, we looked forward to the ACC's endorsement of the Guidelines for Timor-Leste's Participation in ASEAN Activities for Capacity Building Purposes, and the accompanying Matrices of ASEAN Non-Policy Making Activities for Timor-Leste's Participation for Capacity Building Purposes, and their implementation.

**REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**South China Sea

89. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations, activities, serious incidents in the area, including damage to the marine environment, 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. We further reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasized the importance of non-militarization and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.
90. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and recognized the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, and prosperity. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety. We warmly welcomed the continuously improving cooperation between ASEAN and China, and were encouraged by the progress of 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 UNCLOS, within a mutually-agreed timeline. We welcomed the resumption of textual negotiations on the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text (SDNT), which has resulted in provisional agreement on the Preamble section after delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognized the importance of negotiations through virtual platforms, while reaffirming that physical meetings would remain the primary modality, and looked forward to further progress towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasized the need to maintain and promote an environment conducive to the COC negotiations, and thus welcomed practical measures that could reduce tensions and the risk of accidents, misunderstandings and miscalculation. We stressed the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures to enhance, among others, trust and confidence amongst parties, and we reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

Developments in the Korean Peninsula

91. We stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to realize lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. We urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realization of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the United States and Democratic People's Republic of Korea leaders. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We reiterated our readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilizing ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.

### Situation in the Middle East

92. We expressed concern over the recent developments in the Middle East region. In this regard, we welcomed the ceasefire that took effect on 21 May 2021 as a step toward creating conditions conducive for dialogue. We reiterated the need for a comprehensive, just, and sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East region. We urged both sides to actively take positive steps to allow for negotiations to gain traction and work together towards the resumption of negotiations to achieve an enduring peace. We fully support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine with the realization of two states, Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

### Developments in Myanmar

93. We discussed the recent developments in Myanmar and expressed our concern over the situation in the country, including reports of fatalities and violence. We also heard calls for the release of political detainees including foreigners. We welcomed Myanmar's commitment to the Five-Point Consensus of the ASEAN Leaders Meeting on 24 April 2021 and acceptance for the timely and complete implementation of the Five-Point Consensus namely, the immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties to exercise utmost restraint; constructive dialogue among all parties concerned to commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people; a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair to facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary-General of ASEAN; ASEAN to provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre; and the special envoy and delegation to visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned. We welcomed the updates provided by the Secretary-General of ASEAN regarding the status of the "Five Point Consensus". We welcomed the appointment by the ASEAN Chair for the Minister of Foreign Affairs II of Brunei Darussalam to be the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, who will start his work in Myanmar, including building trust and confidence with full access to all parties concerned and providing a clear timeline on the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus before the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting. We noted the continued support from our external partners for ASEAN's efforts in the swift and complete implementation of the "Five-Point Consensus", particularly on humanitarian assistance.
94. We reaffirmed the role of AHA Centre to provide humanitarian assistance in Myanmar as mandated in the Five-Point Consensus of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting. We encourage the Governing Board of the AHA Centre to immediately start the work on the policy guidance to implement the Five-Point Consensus.

## **55<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

95. We looked forward to the convening of the 55<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Post Ministerial Conferences, 23<sup>rd</sup> APT Foreign Ministers' Meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and 29<sup>th</sup> ARF to be held in the Kingdom of Cambodia in 2022.