

2021 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING ON TRANSNATIONAL CRIME: WE CARE, WE PREPARE, WE PROSPER

Issued on 29 September 2021

1. The Fifteenth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (15th AMMTC) was held via videoconference on 29 September 2021 to consolidate and further strengthen regional cooperation in combating transnational crime. The Meeting was chaired by Brunei Darussalam.
2. The Meeting was preceded by the Preparatory ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) for the 15th AMMTC, which was held virtually on 28 September 2021 and chaired by Brunei Darussalam.
3. We exchanged views and reaffirmed our commitment in further strengthening our cooperation in combating transnational crime, including on responses to the challenges in addressing new criminal activities in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.
4. We took note of the outcomes and progress of meetings under the purview of the AMMTC, including the 21st SOMTC and its Related Meetings held virtually on 26-29 July 2021 and the 24th Meeting of the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting (DGICM) and Its Related Meetings held on 25-26 August 2021 via videoconference.
5. We welcomed the resumption of SOMTC and the DGICM Consultations with the Dialogue Partners and the SOMTC Working Group Meetings, which were put on hold at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year.
6. We were pleased to note the effective implementation of the SOMTC Work Programme 2019-2021 and the progress of the review of the current SOMTC Work Programme as well as developing the new SOMTC Work Programme 2022-2024 to Implement the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime 2016-2025. We looked forward to the adoption and effective implementation of the new Work Programme.
7. We commended the efforts of SOMTC and the DGICM in strengthening cooperation with our Dialogue Partners. We welcomed the adoption of the Concept Note on the Establishment of the DGICM + 3 Consultation and looked forward to the convening of the inaugural meeting in 2022. We took note of the adoption of the renewed ASEAN-EU Work Plan to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime 2022-2024, and looked forward to its effective implementation. We also looked forward the development and adoption of work plans to combat transnational crime with Dialogue Partners that are underway.
8. We also took note of the rotation of ASEAN External Relations Coordinatorship and tasked SOMTC to ensure a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming country coordinators and the continuity of our joint efforts to combat transnational crime.
9. We adopted the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration in Combating Transnational Crime Post COVID-19 Pandemic to intensify collective efforts; enhance cooperation and coordination; and explore modalities to promote practical cooperation in preventing and combating transnational crime in the post-pandemic era.

10. We adopted the Concept Paper on ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap to further strengthen cooperation on border management, as reflected in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. We commended the efforts undertaken by Thailand in developing the Concept Note and the DGICM in leading the cross-sectoral coordination.
11. We noted with satisfaction the progress made by Malaysia related to the development of the: (i) Terms of Reference (ToR) of SOMTC, and; (ii) ToR of SOMTC Working Group on General Transnational Crime Matters (WG on GTCM). We looked forward to the finalisation and adoption of both documents.
12. We encouraged efforts toward more practical and operational forms of cooperation and effective implementation of existing work plans under SOMTC and the DGICM as well as the active role and contribution of SOMTC and the DGICM in advancing ASEAN cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation.
13. We welcomed Cambodia as the incoming chair of the AMMTC and looked forward to the convening of the 22nd SOMTC and the 16th AMMTC along with all related meetings in 2022. We also welcomed Singapore as the incoming Chair of the DGICM and looked forward to the convening of the 25th DGICM and its related meetings in 2022.
14. We expressed our sincere appreciation to the Government of Brunei Darussalam, especially the Prime Minister's Office, for the excellent arrangements of the 15th AMMTC and Its Related Meetings. The Meetings were held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of solidarity and cordiality.