

2021 ASEAN-CHINA JOINT STATEMENT ON COOPERATION IN SUPPORT OF THE ASEAN COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Issued on 26 October 2021

We, the Member States of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the People's Republic of China, gathered at the 24th ASEAN-China Summit on 26 October 2021;

NOTING the far-reaching impact and grave challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to socio-economic development in the region, stressing the importance for ASEAN and China to work together in COVID-19 response and economic recovery, and appreciating the achievements the two sides have made together at the current stage;

RECALLING the consensus and commitments on the joint response to COVID-19 and efforts for recovery reflected in the Statement of the Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) held in February 2020;

WELCOMING efforts to enhance cooperation between both sides including through the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA);

NOTING Leaders' statements and visions of ASEAN Member States and China at the 76th United Nations General Assembly in support of the implementation of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development through ASEAN's efforts in promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development; and

RECOGNISING the need for the two sides to strengthen collaboration in post-pandemic recovery, explore potential areas of cooperation, share success stories and best practices, make concerted efforts to facilitate socio-economic recovery and long-term, balanced and resilient development, as well as contribute to peace, stability, prosperity and sustainability;

Hereby agree on the following:

1. Support the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan, which will guide both sides in deepening their cooperation in all fields, and appreciate that China will actively cooperate in the broad strategies and key priorities identified in the Framework through implementing practical cooperation initiatives;

COOPERATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH

2. Strengthen cooperation in public health through policy dialogue and exchanges through the ASEAN-China Health Ministers' Meeting, ASEAN-China Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development, China-ASEAN Health Cooperation Forum and other relevant mechanisms;
3. Enhance cooperation in training of health executives and professionals, such as in the fields of communicable and non-communicable disease control, public health emergency response, safe, effective and quality traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM), and healthcare delivery. Encourage communication between ASEAN contact points for public health emergencies with their Chinese counterparts to facilitate practical and tangible cooperation through relevant mechanisms;

4. Support the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, and strengthen cooperation on COVID-19 vaccines through various means, including making immunisation against COVID-19 as a global public good, promoting the vaccines to the public, jointly engaging in vaccine research and development (R&D), and information on supply capacity so as to help interested ASEAN Member States to build regional vaccine production centers to jointly promote vaccine accessibility and affordability in the region and beyond;
5. Implement the ASEAN-China Public Health Cooperation Initiative: Program on Public Health Emergency Preparedness Capacity (PROMPT) to support cooperation in vaccine R&D, public health capacity-building, and the improvement of information and data exchange platforms on health-related matters;
6. Actively carry out cooperation among medical schools, institutions and universities, maximise the ASEAN-China University Consortium on Medicine and Health as a platform for regional health cooperation and educational exchange, and integrate related educational resources to promote cooperation including joint study on public health policies, personnel training, and discipline development. Chinese Government scholarships exchange program and internship will be provided to outstanding students from ASEAN Member States to support their study of medical and related fields of sciences in China;

COOPERATION ON SOCIAL SECURITY

7. Make good use of the mechanism of ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), and strengthen coordination and mutual assistance among related countries to ensure food supply and food security in the region;
8. Strengthen cooperation on elementary/primary education, vocational education, and higher education in engineering and technology, conduct training programs on employment skills and promote human resource development, including through the ASEAN-China Education Cooperation Week, the ASEAN-China Consortium on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Cooperation, the ASEAN-China Network for Cooperation and Exchange among Engineering and Technology Universities and other platforms;
9. Explore the use of the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF) to further strengthen practical cooperation in youth exchanges, culture, and education, and further enhance the flagship program of ASEAN-China Young Leaders' Scholarship (ACYLS);
10. Enhance exchanges and cooperation on occupational health and safety. China will strengthen cooperation with the ASEAN Centre for Active Aging and Innovation (ACAI) and other related institutions, promote gender equality and women empowerment, and carry out exchanges and cooperation on the promotion and protection of rights and interests as well as social welfare of groups such as the poor, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, women and girls, migrant workers as well as other vulnerable groups;
11. Continue the implementation of the ASEAN-China Social Development and Poverty Reduction Forum and related initiatives, and support poverty reduction and capacity building in rural areas of ASEAN Member States through experience sharing, personnel exchange, policy consultation, demonstration programs, including on the use of digital economy, as appropriate;

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

12. Maintain trade and investment market openness, as well as explore new and enhance existing initiatives to promote trade and investment. Work together to reduce the trade barrier effects of Non-Tariff Measures. Enhance cooperation in customs procedures and trade facilitation with priority given to the facilitation of customs clearance of food, agricultural products, medical products, and other essential goods. Explore the possible exchange of electronic trade-related documents through the ASEAN Single Window. Jointly implement the ASEAN Rules of Origin Implementation Capacity Project. Continue efforts to streamline investment procedures, enhance investment facilitation and jointly carry out investment promotion activities in accordance with the respective national laws;
13. Support the “Connecting the Connectivities” approach, and accelerate the implementation of the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Synergising the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Explore cooperation on projects in the Initial Rolling Priority Pipeline of Potential ASEAN Infrastructure Projects. Enhance Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), make full use of the ASEAN-China Investment Cooperation Fund II (ACIF II), and cooperate on sustainable infrastructure development including trade-related infrastructure, energy, resources and other major projects to bolster connectivity in the region;
14. Work together for the early entry into force and implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, to deliver benefits to businesses and people in the region at an early date. Efforts will be made to effectively implement the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA), and the remaining elements in the Future Work Program under the ACFTA Upgrading Protocol and to also explore broader mutual opening-up in other areas under the ACFTA, including by creating more trade opportunities in digital economy and fostering new sources of growth for cooperation, working towards a more inclusive, modern, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial ASEAN-China Free Trade Area;
15. Strengthen cooperation to enhance the connectivity and resilience of supply chains in the region. Jointly explore the development of economic corridors, as well as economic, trade and industrial parks as part of efforts to deepen cooperation on supply chains including of essential goods, and capitalise on the geographical and industrial advantages of ASEAN and China economic zones to further expand industrial connectivity;
16. Explore ways to strengthen technical cooperation between ASEAN and China including through possible cooperation with the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) in areas aligned with the needs and priorities of ASEAN and its Member States;
17. Continue to discuss the establishment of an ASEAN-China Tourism Ministers’ Meeting mechanism in due course, and promote tourism cooperation within multilateral frameworks. Support the implementation of the ASEAN Post-Pandemic Tourism Recovery Plan, and the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy, accelerating the implementation of the “Enhance ASEAN Tourism Digital Platform” project, and promoting the safe resumption of air connectivity between ASEAN and China so as to facilitate the promotion of people-to-people connectivity. Strengthen, as relevant, inter-city cooperation on tourism marketing on platforms such as the Culture City of East Asia, the ASEAN City of Culture and the Mekong-Lancang Tourist Cities Cooperation Alliance, and welcome China’s initiative on the Asia Tourism Promotion Plan;

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

18. Work together to formulate the Action Plan on Implementing the ASEAN-China Partnership on Digital Economy Cooperation (2021-2025) and strengthen cooperation under the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025;
19. Work together to enhance digital connectivity, and support efforts towards bridging the digital divide;
20. Enhance cooperation on e-commerce and digital economy and support the implementation of the Work Plan on the Implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce 2021-2025. Enhance the development of digital skills and networks of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including those in the creative economy. Improve financial infrastructure development in the region, and explore cooperation areas such as financial technology, green financing and regional payments connectivity;
21. Actively promote distance education and telemedicine, and develop a digital economy and society that are innovative, sustainable and inclusive of the vulnerable groups of the society to bridge the digital divide;
22. Enhance digital governance and cyber security and continue to support the ASEAN-China Cyber Dialogue, and work together to expand practical cooperation on cyber security and digital governance, as well as by coordinating with ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee. Strengthen cooperation on capacity building through established ASEAN centres of capacity building;
23. Effectively implement the ASEAN-China Leaders Statement on Smart City Cooperation Initiative, support China's active engagement of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), and encourage the establishment of mutually-beneficial city partnerships between ASEAN cities, in particular ASEAN Smart Cities Network cities and Chinese cities as well as partnerships involving private sector solution providers and other relevant institutions from both sides;

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

24. Strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and early realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
25. Implement the outcomes of the ASEAN-China Year of Sustainable Development Cooperation, actively push forward sustainable economic recovery in the region, explore possible cooperation on circular economy and other sustainable economic models as inspired by regional and national action plans such as the Belt and Road Partnership on Green Development and Bio-Circular-Green Economy to achieve green, low-carbon, sustainable recovery and development and work together to promote the complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
26. Support the convening of ASEAN-China high-level environmental policy dialogues and enhance exchanges and cooperation on the environment and sustainable development between ASEAN and Chinese institutions, including the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, and the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center (CAEC). Jointly implement the Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025), promote cooperation in priority areas including environmental policy dialogue and capacity building, climate change and air quality improvement, sustainable cities and marine plastic reduction, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem management. Promote integrated water resources management and explore ASEAN-China

- partnership on mangrove forest protection and other nature-based solutions to achieve the sustainability of the regional environment;
27. Uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, strengthen dialogue and international cooperation to respond to climate change, increase information exchange and experience sharing, provide mutual support and explore exchanges and cooperation in carbon trade and related areas to jointly address climate change and realise the transition to green and low-carbon development;
 28. Strengthen technological cooperation on energy storage, power grid, protection of critical energy infrastructures, and new energy sources, increase energy efficiency, realise the transition towards renewable and sustainable energy, exchange views on policies on low-carbon growth. Support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) Phase II: 2021-2025. Implement the ASEAN-China New and Renewable Energy Action Plan and the ASEAN-China Clean Energy Capacity Building Program, through various activities such as knowledge and information exchange, capacity building programmes, joint research and publications, and demonstration projects, and actively carry out cooperation on standardisation of renewable energy and mutual recognition of standards on a multilateral basis;
 29. Deepen and expand the ASEAN-China Partnership for Eco-friendly Urban Development, engage in cooperation on sustainable and green infrastructure, low-carbon technologies, marine plastic reduction, improvement of environment quality and other areas of urban sustainable development through policy communication and sharing of best practices to jointly achieve sustainable urban transformation for green development;
 30. Build a closer partnership in science, technology and innovation. Strengthen the sharing of best practices of science and innovation policies, support young ASEAN and China scientists to conduct scientific research in ASEAN and China, strengthen the existing ASEAN-China Technology Transfer Centre, and support the building of a joint platform and base for ASEAN-China science and innovation cooperation;
 31. Promote sustainable development of agriculture that incorporates circular economy and enhance agricultural productivity, integrate agriculture with tourism, culture, health and other sectors, and increase the added value of agricultural products;
 32. Make full use of the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM Plus China), support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) work programmes and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) work plans; and
 33. Encourage the increase of the proportion of sustainable investment and financing between both sides, support financing institutions and relevant enterprises to grow and promote green financing and green financial markets in an orderly manner, and work towards interoperability of standards for green and transition activities in the region.