

2022 PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' RETREAT

Issued in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 17 February 2022

1. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was convened on 16-17 February 2022 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in hybrid format. The Retreat was the first major meeting of the year under Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022 with the theme "ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together".
2. We had fruitful deliberations on ASEAN's priorities for the year of 2022 and on concrete and implementable ways to strengthen the ASEAN Community, ASEAN Centrality, and unity, as well as ASEAN external partnerships. We also exchanged views on regional and international developments and reaffirmed our shared commitment towards promoting sustainable peace, security, stability, prosperity, within and beyond the region.
3. We expressed support for Cambodia's key priorities and deliverables in 2022, which are in line with the goals of ASEAN Community building and continue to build upon ongoing efforts of the previous ASEAN Chairmanship priorities.
4. We also discussed follow-up to and agreed to effectively implement the outcomes and decisions of the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits, including, among others, review of the implementation of the ASEAN Charter, strengthening complementarities between ASEAN and sub-regional cooperation in narrowing the development gap within and among ASEAN Member States, promoting cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination in ASEAN, working towards the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, implementation of ASEAN SHIELD, the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy, the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme and regional responses to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of ASEAN COVID-19 initiatives, 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 reaffirmed the importance of mainstreaming gender equality throughout the response, and the recovery process given the unequal gendered impacts of the pandemic.
5. We looked forward to the expeditious implementation of the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF) to facilitate essential business and official travels between and among ASEAN Member States, while prioritising public health and safety in preventing and controlling the transmission of COVID-19.
6. We commended the operationalisation of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to ensure fair, equitable, and affordable access to safe, effective and quality vaccines. We encouraged the full and efficient use of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to procure more vaccines, medical supplies and therapeutics for the people of ASEAN, as well as to support research and development, and capability and capacity building relevant to COVID-19. We also stressed the importance of sustaining public health and social measures amidst safe reopening of borders, and progress towards vaccine security and self-reliance.
7. We reiterated ASEAN's strong commitment to open, rules-based, and inclusive regionalism and multilateralism in upholding and promoting multilateral cooperation, anchored in the principles stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of international law, in addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities of mutual interests while reinforcing ASEAN's key

principles and values towards achieving peace, security, stability and promoting sustainable and resilient development and prosperity in our region.

8. We looked forward to the timely establishment and early operationalisation of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) to strengthen ASEAN's regional capabilities to respond to public health emergencies and emerging diseases.
9. We recalled the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy and look forward to its implementation given the growing interest from external partners to engage ASEAN Member States on the concept, both bilaterally and regionally. We look forward to the ASEAN Coordinating Council's (ACC) role in overseeing the overall implementation of the Declaration, which may include developing a regional action plan, and identifying the Lead Sectoral Body, with the support of the Joint Consultative Meeting (JCM).
10. We stressed the importance of amplifying ASEAN awareness and fostering ASEAN Identity through our Community-building efforts. Following the adoption of the Narrative of ASEAN Identity, we agreed to actively promote the Narrative through relevant activities.
11. We recalled the establishment of the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme with the ASEAN Secretariat at the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits, which is aimed at enhancing familiarisation with the work of ASEAN, developing skilled officers, enabling networking, and strengthening the sense of ASEAN Identity. We welcomed the funding to the Programme by Brunei Darussalam for the next ten (10) years and look forward to its inaugural convening later this year and the participation of all ASEAN Member States.
12. We also emphasised the importance of deepening ASEAN economic integration, enhancing intra-ASEAN trade and investment and enhancing supply chain connectivity, in line with ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. We welcomed the advancement of the ASEAN Economic Community building process, which is transforming ASEAN into an economically-integrated, competitive, connected, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive region, with a special emphasis on narrowing the development gap among its Member States. We also reiterated commitment to foster economic growth while responding to climate change, through realizing commitment on greenhouse emissions reduction, to ensure an ever-better life for ASEAN people.
13. We welcomed the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement on 1 January 2022. We encouraged all the remaining signatories to complete their ratification of the Agreement as soon as possible. We reiterated our commitment to ensure full and effective implementation of the Agreement in order to establish an open trade and investment environment in the region to facilitate the expansion of regional trade and investment and contribute to global economic growth and development as well as boost economic growth and equitable economic development, advance economic cooperation, and broaden and deepen integration in the region through the RCEP, which will build upon our existing economic linkages.
14. We highlighted our continuous efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. In this regard, we looked forward to the inaugural meeting of the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) for the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision at the ASEAN Secretariat, which will be co-chaired by Malaysia and Cambodia, and the commencement of its work towards the formulation of an ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision. We also endorsed the Concept Paper on Strengthening ASEAN's Capacity and Institutional Effectiveness that mandated the HLTF to identify and recommend ways to improve ASEAN's capacity and institutional effectiveness with a view to be submitted to the ASEAN Leaders in 2022.

15. We recalled the adoption of the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), which is a strategic, holistic, cross-sectoral and coordinated approach across the three ASEAN Community Pillars, to ensure ASEAN's collective, rapid, effective and timely response in mitigating the impacts of different types of emergencies and disasters that have or may affect the Southeast Asian region, with a view to better protect the society, economy and the broader developmental agenda. We task the ASEAN Secretariat to provide an update on the review of the TOR of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC).
16. We affirmed our commitment to contributing to the goals of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement and recalled the adoption of the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. We supported in principle the establishment of an ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) in Brunei Darussalam and look forward to its early establishment as it will function as an inter-governmental centre for climate change coordination and cooperation among ASEAN Member States to realise a climate-resilient and low carbon ASEAN region.
17. We underscored the importance to accelerate regional integration through the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025). We agreed to enhance synergies between the MPAC 2025 with other sub-regional and inter-regional frameworks to support recovery and build resilience. In this regard, we look forward to the finalisation of the ASEAN Connectivity Post-2025 Vision.
18. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing sustainable development cooperation, including with external 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).
19. 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.
20. We welcomed the growing number of countries who have requested to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), based on respect for and in conformity with the purposes and principles of the TAC. We reaffirmed the TAC as the key code of conduct governing interstate relations in the region and as a foundation for maintaining regional peace and stability. We also looked forward to the accession of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Hellenic Republic, the Netherlands, the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.
21. We reaffirmed the importance of pursuing ASEAN's outward-looking approach and agreed on the need to reach out to new potential partners based on mutual interests, constructive engagement, mutual respect, and mutual benefits, which can contribute to ASEAN's Community-building and development cooperation efforts, as well as efforts to promote comprehensive, and sustainable regional recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, we looked forward to the commencement of a comprehensive review of the moratorium on new dialogue partnerships, in conjunction with the work of the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, with the objective to enhancing the ASEAN Community and advancing 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.

22. 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, and to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime in achieving general and complete nuclear disarmament, as stipulated in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). 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.
23. We underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN Centrality and unity in our engagement with ASEAN's external partners through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN-Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (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. In this regard, we looked forward to the Special ASEAN-US Summit to be held in Washington D.C and the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit in Brussels this year to mark the 45th anniversary of both the ASEAN-US and ASEAN-EU partnerships.
24. We underscored the importance of undertaking concrete steps to realize the goals of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) to safeguard and preserve ASEAN Centrality, as the underlying principle for promoting cooperation, including strengthening a rules-based framework, openness, transparency, inclusivity, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention as well as complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks and guides ASEAN's engagement with its partners in ASEAN-led mechanisms. Towards that end, we agreed to adopt the Concept Paper on Mainstreaming Four Priority Areas of the AOIP and further task the CPR to follow up on this decision and report back at the upcoming 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in August 2022.
25. We reaffirmed the objectives and principles of the AOIP, which provides a guide for ASEAN's constructive engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. We encouraged our external partners to support the AOIP and look forward to undertaking substantive, practical and tangible cooperation between ASEAN and the wider region within the framework of the AOIP in the four identified priorities areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and economic and other areas of cooperation.
26. We noted the progress made in preparing for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Pillars Fact-Finding Missions (FFMs) to Timor-Leste. We looked forward to the convening of the FFMs to Timor-Leste by the AEC and ASCC Pillars when circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic allow, after which a comprehensive assessment of Timor Leste's application for ASEAN membership would be developed. We reaffirmed our commitment to provide capacity building assistance to Timor-Leste, including through participation in non-policy making activities in ASEAN.
27. 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, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations, activities, 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 importance of and commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, 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).

28. We emphasised the importance of undertaking confidence building and preventive measures to enhance, among others, trust and confidence, 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. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We 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. We emphasised the need to maintain and promote an environment conducive to the COC negotiations and thus welcomed further practical measures to avoid escalating tensions, the risk of accidents, misunderstandings, and miscalculations that would affect peace and stability.
29. We expressed grave concerns over the continued ballistic missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties towards lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. To this end, we urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working constructively, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the U.S. and DPRK Leaders. We called on the DPRK to comply fully with all relevant UNSC resolutions, taking into account the international community's calls for diplomacy and in the interest of maintaining peace and security in the region. We noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and reaffirmed ASEAN's readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, in promoting a conducive atmosphere for peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.
30. We reaffirmed ASEAN's continued support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace and stability, to promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities as well as to promote inclusive and sustainable development in Rakhine State. We further reaffirmed ASEAN's readiness to play a more visible and enhanced role to support Myanmar in these endeavours. We emphasised the need to facilitate the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure and dignified manner. We appreciated the contribution from ASEAN Member States and external partners in supporting the prioritised projects to facilitate the repatriation process and to promote inclusive and sustainable development in Rakhine State. We look 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.
31. We discussed the recent developments in Myanmar and expressed our deep concerns over the situation in the country. We recalled efforts made to help solve the crisis, including the recent visit to Myanmar by Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia. We urged the authorities in Naypyitaw to take concrete actions to effectively and fully implement the Five-Point Consensus reached at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021. We called for the immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties to exercise utmost restraint as well as commence constructive dialogue to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people of Myanmar. We supported the progress in the effective delivery of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance, including through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), to the people of Myanmar who are most in need without discrimination, on the basis of the principles of humanity.

32. ASEAN Member States welcomed the endorsement of His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar; and called on the authorities in Naypyitaw to facilitate missions of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair, beginning with the first visit to Myanmar as soon as possible in order to move forward the implementation of the five-point consensus. In this regard, we recognized that in undertaking his duties, the Special Envoy could engage with all the parties concerned. We also encouraged the Special Envoy to coordinate closely with the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General on Myanmar to ensure synergy in this important endeavour. We reaffirmed our commitment and readiness to help Myanmar in accordance with the will of the people of Myanmar on the basis of the five-point consensus and the ASEAN Charter with an understanding that durable peace and national reconciliation can be achieved only through an inclusive political solution that is Myanmar-owned and Myanmar-led and involving all parties concerned.
33. We underscored the utmost necessity to preserve and reinforce ASEAN's Centrality, unity, neutrality, relevance, and resilience in the region amidst the fast-changing global and regional geopolitical landscapes to address challenges together based on key principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, rules-based approach, mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit.