

2021 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 16TH EAST ASIA SUMMIT

Adopted on 27 October 2021

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1. The 16th East Asia Summit (EAS) was held via video conference on 27 October 2021. The Summit was chaired by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) briefed the Summit.
2. We reaffirmed our commitment to the 2020 Ha Noi Declaration on the Fifteenth Anniversary of the East Asia Summit, which underscores the role of the EAS as the premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity in East Asia.
3. We further reaffirmed ASEAN's central role in the EAS and ASEAN's commitment to work in close partnership with all EAS participating countries to ensure that the EAS continues to be an integral component of the regional architecture. We acknowledged the importance placed by ASEAN on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which serves as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions to contribute to peace, stability, freedom and prosperity. ASEAN Member States welcomed non-ASEAN EAS participating countries to further develop practical cooperation with ASEAN in the priority areas as enshrined in the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the East Asia Summit Development Initiative (2018-2022).
4. We discussed the future direction of EAS cooperation and exchanged views on regional and international issues, including on promoting comprehensive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and ways to strengthen collaboration to improve preparedness for future crises and public health emergencies. We emphasised the important role of the EAS in strengthening multilateralism, maintaining an ASEAN-centered regional architecture, contributing to a rules-based approach managing inter-state relations in the region in accordance with international law in promoting strategic trust. We recognised the importance of engaging in frank, candid and constructive dialogue on strategic issues of common interest amongst the EAS Leaders' in order to reinforce mutual trust and confidence towards addressing common challenges and advancing practical cooperation for mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit.
5. We welcomed and appreciated continued efforts to strengthen the EAS work processes, such as through the EAS Ambassadors' Meeting in Jakarta and the EAS Senior Officials' Meeting, to ensure the effective follow-up and implementation of the EAS Leaders' decisions and initiatives in a timely manner, including during inter-sessional periods. In this regard, we recognised the role and contributions of Ambassadors of EAS participating countries in Jakarta in discussing and providing recommendations to implement the EAS Leaders' decisions as well as exchanging information on regional cooperation initiatives, security policies and initiatives, and discussions on the evolving regional architecture. We also welcomed the further strengthening of the EAS Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat to facilitate and support EAS coordination and cooperation.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

6. We recognised that positive progress has been made in the areas of EAS cooperation under the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative (2018-2022). We underscored the need to accelerate efforts to ensure the timely implementation of the Plan of Action by 2022, during which the Plan of Action is set to expire. We looked forward to the development of a successor Plan of Action (2023-2027), building on the existing Plan of Action's areas of cooperation as well as current issues and challenges.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

7. We recognised the importance of a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which will support economic growth, accelerate ongoing efforts in climate action and biodiversity conservation, and advance the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030. In order to ensure economic recovery and sustainable growth, we called for stability in the international oil market through sufficient supply of crude oil, including increased production. We expressed our support for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and to the convening of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. We also welcomed the conduct of EAS activities in the area of environmental cooperation, including the 11th EAS High Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities (EAS HLS-SC) that was held on 29-30 September 2020, and hosted by the Philippines via videoconference. We noted the importance of increasing the frequency of policy dialogue, communication, and other forms of collaboration and confidence building measures to enhance understanding on initiatives in the field of climate change, energy security, and environmental protection in the region. We also welcomed the EAS Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Recovery, which solidifies our commitment in advancing sustainable development and tackling climate change, as well as addressing other economic, social, and environmental challenges.
8. We welcomed the productive outcomes of the 15th EAS Energy Ministers' Meeting hosted by Brunei Darussalam on 16 September 2021 via videoconference. We noted with satisfaction the implementation of concrete initiatives in working towards a sustainable energy future for the EAS region under the three work streams of the EAS Energy Cooperation Task Force (ECTF), namely, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Biofuels for Transport and Other Purposes, and Renewable and Alternative Power Generation. We looked forward to the initiatives contributing to energy transition in the EAS region on the promotion of innovative technologies and low carbon societies, including hydrogen, carbon recycling, and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS). We welcomed the successful convening of the New Energy Forum by China via videoconference and looked forward to the convening of the Clean Energy Forum by China scheduled this year. We noted that there is no single pathway to achieve a low carbon economy, but rather there are diverse paths for each country. We emphasised the need to explore a variety of options and utilise all fuels and technologies to ensure a secure and stable supply of energy for achieving economic growth. We appreciated the continued contributions of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in implementing the EAS Mid-Term Energy Policy Research Roadmap 2019 - 2021 for the three EAS ECTF work streams. We welcomed the successful convening of the 4th East Asia Energy Forum (EAEF4) co-organised by ERIA and Brunei Darussalam on 13 September 2021 via videoconference that focused on the low carbon energy transition in the ASEAN region. We looked forward for the convening of the 5th East Asia Summit Clean Energy Forum to be held in Chengdu, China on 25 – 26 November 2021. We also welcomed the successful convening of the 1st Asia CCUS Network Forum co-hosted by ERIA and Japan on 22 – 23 June 2021 via videoconference, as well as the Asia Green Growth Partnership Ministerial Meeting hosted by Japan on 4 October 2021 via videoconference. We further encouraged enhancing EAS energy

cooperation in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) Phase II: 2021-2025.

EDUCATION

9. We encouraged advancing cooperation in ensuring inclusive and life-long skills development and digital literacy, and mutually beneficial education cooperation through the alignment and complementing of the related action lines under the EAS' Plan of Action with the ASEAN Workplan on Education 2021-2025. We commended the implementation of inclusive and quality education programmes and activities by EAS participating countries in the areas of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and people-to-people exchanges including through scholarship programmes and the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education. We looked forward to exploring collaboration with the ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council in complementing the initiatives of EAS countries in TVET with the ASEAN TVET Council Work Plan 2021-2030. We welcomed the convening of the 6th EAS Senior Officials' Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) and the 5th EAS Education Ministers Meeting hosted by the Philippines on 30 September and 1 October 2021 respectively. We note the need to continue to adapt, innovate, and develop ways forward in engaging the challenges on education amidst the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

FINANCE

10. We stressed the importance of strengthening the region's financial resilience to external shocks, especially against the backdrop of COVID-19 through ensuring macroeconomic and financial stability, consistent monitoring of risks and vulnerabilities, and continuing regional financial cooperation as well as enhancing collaboration with international financial institutions.

GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUES AND PANDEMIC DISEASES

11. We reaffirmed the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing and recovering from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, families, communities and economies in the region. We reiterated the need to prioritise cooperation in the distribution of effective, safe, and affordable anti-viral medicines and COVID-19 vaccines, ensuring their equitable access to contain the spread of the virus as well as research and development of vaccines and enhancing medical and public health capacity. In this connection, we welcomed the convening of the EAS Experts' Meeting on COVID-19 which was held on 14 October 2020 via videoconference. ASEAN expressed appreciation to EAS participating countries for the support provided through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (COVAX AMC) financing instrument as well as multilateral contributions to ASEAN Member States. ASEAN looked forward to greater support from the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries to ASEAN's efforts to achieve vaccine security and self-reliance, including but not limited to, regional cooperation on vaccine production and distribution.
12. We recalled the EAS Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Collective Capacity in Epidemics Prevention and Response at the 15th EAS on 14 November 2020 which, inter-alia, recognises the unprecedented and severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to adopt effective and comprehensive response to the health, wellbeing, livelihood and safety of our peoples, and its adverse impacts on the socio-economic development and sociocultural aspects of EAS participating countries. In this regard, we reiterated the need to enhance efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC)—while acknowledging that each country has its own national approach—with the aim of leaving no one behind, is essential in containing the global spread of COVID-19 and preparing for future health crises.

13. We recognised the importance of mental health as a critical public health issue that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and called for advancing EAS cooperation on mental health. We expressed support for and looked forward to the convening of the EAS Workshop on Mental Health Cooperation to be co-hosted by Brunei Darussalam and Australia.
14. We acknowledged ASEAN's key initiatives in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and in promoting multilateral cooperation, namely the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan; the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund; the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies; the ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies; Mitigation of Biological Threats Programme; ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance; and the ASEAN Public Health Emergency Coordination System. We also welcomed the progress on the implementation of the Plan of Action for the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management (2019-2025). We expressed support for exploring areas of cooperation in these regional initiatives to better prepare for and respond to all hazards and emerging health threats.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

15. We emphasised the need to foster closer collaboration in disaster management by incorporating climate change adaptation and disaster resilience in supporting regional capacities in disaster management and emergency response and address their disruptions to socio-economic development. We reiterated our support for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) as well as the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region. We reaffirmed our commitment to supporting the implementation of the priority programmes of the AADMER Work Programme (AWP) (2021-2025) as well as strengthening the capacity of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) as the main operational engine of AADMER and as the primary ASEAN regional coordinating agency on disaster management and emergency response for natural disasters. We commend ASEAN initiatives and mechanisms in responding to regional emergencies and disasters that enable the optimisation and streamlining efforts among ASEAN member states for a unified response to emergency and disaster management challenges in the region.
16. We encouraged strengthening engagement between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the national disaster management organisations of non-ASEAN EAS participating countries through participation in ASEAN-led activities/projects such as the biennial ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX), the AADMER Partnership Conference (APC) and the annual ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM).

ASEAN CONNECTIVITY

17. We reaffirmed the importance of promoting connectivity to facilitate trade, investment and service competitiveness in the region and to support socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognised the importance of continuing to promote greater synergies among the various connectivity strategies within and beyond the region. We also acknowledged that the timely implementation of connectivity projects is critical to strengthening the region's resilience to deal with future public health emergencies and other crises. In this connection, the Meeting welcomed efforts by Mekong development partners to align their efforts with other subregional as well as regional mechanisms, such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and other strategies that contribute to enhancing ASEAN connectivity and Community building efforts.

18. We reaffirmed our support for the EAS Leaders' Statement on Cooperation to Promote Steady Growth of Regional Economy, which acknowledges the importance of enhanced connectivity within the region to support ASEAN Connectivity. We reiterated that long-term connectivity would benefit all EAS countries through sustainable and quality infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility, which would strengthen regional supply chains. We support ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gap with the adoption of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025) and ASEAN's enhanced role in ensuring sustainable and equitable development across the ASEAN Community, including through aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN.
19. We expressed support for ASEAN's efforts to effectively implement the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, which aims to achieve a seamless and comprehensively connected and integrated ASEAN that will promote competitiveness, inclusiveness and a greater sense of community. We encouraged further engagement between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and non-ASEAN EAS participating countries through the ACCC Consultations with Dialogue Partners and Other External Partners on Connectivity and the ASEAN Connectivity Symposium.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND TRADE

20. We emphasised the essential role of trade and investment in tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and in enabling a strong economic recovery for all our people. We underscored the importance of working together to facilitate the flow of goods and services, especially those that are most essential in supporting our public health and economic responses at this critical time. We are committed to the common goal of advancing a stronger and more sustainable economic growth in the region by facilitating trade and investment, restoring tourism and tourism-related sectors, building secure, resilient and stable supply chains, maintaining supportive fiscal policy actions and monetary policies, ensuring strong macroeconomic fundamentals and a predictable business environment. We welcomed the discussions on possible collaboration in promoting sustainable development, including through measures that promote transition towards bio, green, and circular economies. We also acknowledged that the pandemic has accelerated the process of digitalisation, and we underscored the importance of an enabling, inclusive and nondiscriminatory digital economy that fosters the application of new technologies.
21. We reaffirmed our commitment to keeping markets open, free, fair, transparent, predictable, non-discriminatory and competitive, through a rules-based multilateral trading system centered on the WTO, as well as recognising the need to reform the WTO to improve its effectiveness. We underscored the importance of strengthening economic relations among the EAS participating countries, with ASEAN playing a central role. We encouraged increased dialogue and collaboration on common economic challenges facing EAS participating countries to further strengthen regional economic integration and narrow the development gap in the region. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) participating countries acknowledged the conclusion of negotiation and signing of the RCEP agreement at the 4th RCEP Summit in 15 November 2020 as their strong commitment to supporting economic recovery, inclusive development, as well as support for an open, inclusive, rules-based trade and investment arrangement, and noted their hope for RCEP's early entry into force in early January 2022.

22. We welcomed the successful convening of the 9th EAS Economic Ministers' Meeting on 15 September 2021, which underscored the important role of a rules-based multilateral trading system in catalysing the region's economic growth and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of exploring ways to accelerate economic recovery and to keep markets open for free flow of goods, services and investments. We noted that the Meeting also reiterated its support for ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-centred regional architecture, which will contribute to comprehensive recovery efforts.
23. We commended ERIA for its continued research and analysis on key regional economic issues that support economic integration and digital economy in the region. We welcomed the report of the 14th ERIA Governing Board Meeting held on 12 October 2021, which highlighted the approaches and strategies that promote physical and digital connectivity that ASEAN and East Asia should pursue to establish the "new normal" in ensuring a strengthened and resilient economic environment in the region. We encouraged ERIA to continue providing for the Chair of the ASEAN Summit and the EAS its support and targeted high-quality research and actionable policy recommendations that highlight and address the ERIA's paper on "Supply Chain Resilience and Post-Pandemic Recovery in the East Asia Summit region" to EAS Economic Ministers.
24. We welcomed and encouraged further efforts to develop the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) in building a network of smart cities that are resilient, innovative and well-connected, in line with the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Smart Cities.

FOOD SECURITY

25. We reaffirmed our commitment to implement the Declaration of the 8th EAS on Food Security and reiterated the importance of further enhancing food and nutrition security through the implementation of the new ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (SPA-FS) 2021-2025. In this regard, we noted that the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 will be held in December 2021, which aims to improve food and nutrition security as well as sustainable food systems. We expressed support for the work of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) in ensuring sustainable food systems and implementing climate-smart agriculture that will strengthen the capacity of ASEAN to address the impact of climate change on food production in the region.

MARITIME COOPERATION

26. We noted the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution A/RES/75/239 emphasising, in the Preamble, the universal and unified character of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (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. We expressed support for strengthening maritime cooperation among the EAS participating countries in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS and in line with the 2015 EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation and the Manila Plan of Action in a collective and comprehensive approach, at the same time emphasising the need to enhance synergy with other ASEAN led-mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts. We look forward to the convening of the EAS Workshop on Combating Marine Pollution, co-hosted by Singapore, India and Australia.

27. We reaffirmed our support for the EAS Leaders' Statement on Marine Sustainability, which emphasises that addressing the negative environmental impacts on ocean systems, including through the mitigation of and adaptation to negative impacts of climate change, are key to ensuring the health, productivity and resilience of the ocean and sustainability of marine resources and the environment, coastal communities and thus, the future. We reiterated the importance of promoting cooperation on marine sustainability and economic development, protection and conservation of the marine and coastal environment including biodiversity, ecosystems and resources, as well as protecting people whose livelihoods depend on the ocean from harmful activities and other threats, such as land-based and sea-based pollution, and combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, through dialogue and optimising ASEAN-led mechanisms to address common challenges and concerns, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

OTHER AREAS

28. We discussed the growing importance of security of and in the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), and reaffirmed the need to enhance cooperation to promote a peaceful, secure, transparent, open, stable, accessible, interoperable and cooperative ICT environment and prevent the risk of misperception, miscalculation and escalation of tension leading to conflict and crisis by developing trust and confidence among states, including through capacity building measures.

29. We reaffirmed our support for the implementation of EAS Leaders' Statements and Declarations related to traditional and non-traditional security issues, including the 2020 EAS Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security; the 2019 EAS Leaders' Statement on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime; the 2019 EAS Leaders' Statement on Combating the Spread of Illicit Drugs; the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on the Safe and Secure Use, Storage, and Transport of Nuclear and Other Radioactive Materials; the 2017 EAS Leaders' Statement on Chemical Weapons; and the 2016 EAS Statement on Non-Proliferation.

30. We recognised that tourism is one of the main contributors to sustained and inclusive economic growth, employment, social benefits and livelihoods of local communities, and commended the relentless efforts of the ASEAN tourism sector in implementing timely and innovative measures to ensure that the tourism sector recovers and becomes more resilient in the face of several setbacks, through facilitating cross-border travel in safe and gradual manner. In this regard, we welcomed the proposed EAS Leaders' Statement on Economic Growth through Tourism Recovery to revitalise the tourism sector, and to facilitate economic growth and sustainable tourism in the region.

31. We acknowledged that the cultural and creative sector has the potential to contribute to economic recovery, citing the significant role of culture and the arts in the socio-economic post pandemic recovery and beyond. We recognised the need to further develop capacity building initiatives, enhance People-to-People Connectivity and promote the exchange of expertise in programs to upskill the cultural and creative industries, and continue to harness the artists' resiliency and adaptability to migrate to digital platforms to mitigate physical restrictions.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

DEVELOPMENTS IN MYANMAR

32. We discussed the recent developments in Myanmar and expressed concern over the situation in the country, including reports of fatalities and violence. We also heard calls by some EAS participating countries for the release of all political detainees including foreigners. We called on Myanmar to fulfil its 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 shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people; the 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 efforts by the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar and called on all parties concerned in Myanmar to swiftly and fully implement their commitment to the Five-Point Consensus, including by facilitating the visit of the Special Envoy to Myanmar to build trust and confidence with full access to all parties concerned. We welcomed the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar, through the AHA Centre. ASEAN also welcomed the continued support from our external partners, including the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries, for ASEAN's efforts in the swift and complete implementation of the Five-Point Consensus and in this regard ASEAN's efforts in providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar.

KOREAN PENINSULA

33. We reaffirmed our support for diplomacy and dialogue in achieving complete denuclearisation of and establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. We recognised the efforts made by all parties concerned to resume dialogue and advance peace process on the Korean peninsula over the past four years. We also welcomed the restoration of inter-Korean communication lines, and noted that it will contribute to further improving and developing inter-Korean relations. We urged all parties concerned to continue working together constructively towards the complete denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration and Pyongyang Joint Declaration between the ROK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the Singapore Joint Statement by the U.S. and the DPRK's Leaders. We underscored the significance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and welcomed the ROK's efforts to advance inter-Korean dialogue, engagement, and cooperation to restore the virtuous cycle where inter-Korean relations and U.S.-DPRK relations advance in a mutually reinforcing manner. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The importance of international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula was stressed in the Meeting. We stressed the need to promote mutual trust, mutual respect, and confidence building for a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue among the concerned parties, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms, such as the ARF. We noted views expressed by some EAS participating countries on the importance of addressing the humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

34. 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 pursue peaceful resolution of disputes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We noted the ongoing negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and encouraged further progress towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC, within a mutually agreed timeline and that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasised the need to 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 reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.
35. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Leaders on the land reclamations, activities and serious incidents in the area, including and 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 universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the DOC that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, RADICALISATION AND TERRORISM

36. We strongly condemned terrorist attacks in recent months that have caused significant loss of life and serious injuries. We reaffirmed our commitment to preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism, radicalisation and terrorism through the effective implementation of counterterrorism measures at the national, regional and sub-regional levels including under the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism where applicable, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the 2017 EAS Leaders' Statement on Countering Ideological Challenges of Terrorism and Terrorist Narratives and Propaganda and the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Countering the Threat of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Returnees. We reiterated the need for a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all countries as well as international and regional organisations to address terrorist threats. We also reaffirmed our commitment to extend support to the region in its implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Violent Extremism (ASEAN PoA PCRVE); and ASEAN Member States in their implementation of their respective national action plans.
37. We stressed the value of promoting greater awareness of different cultures, customs and faiths to foster tolerant and responsible societies. We underlined the importance of strengthening international cooperation, consistent with the applicable international and domestic laws, to address the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs). We reiterated the commitment to preventing and countering the use of ICTs for terrorist purposes and countering the spread of or incitement to violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

38. We underscored the importance of peacebuilding initiatives that are anchored on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) in neutralising the threats of violent extremists, addressing the root causes of radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism, and bringing lasting peace among ASEAN Member States.

ENDURING REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

39. We recognised the challenges and uncertainties facing the region that could undermine its regional security, sustainable development and economic growth, and affect the dynamic of an open, inclusive, and people-centred ASEAN Community and ASEAN Centrality. We reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct governing inter-State relations in the region, underscored its relevance to the wider region and recognised its contribution to promoting regional peace, stability and security. We also acknowledged the importance of the AOIP as a guide for ASEAN's cooperation in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions to contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the region. We took note of discussions on promoting engagements and undertaking cooperation in ASEAN's priority areas for cooperation identified in the Outlook, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and economic and related areas through practical projects of common interest and mutual benefit, through existing ASEAN-led platforms.
40. We remain fully committed to preserve Southeast Asia as a region free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, while supporting global efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in line with the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) Declaration and Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). We also noted views expressed by some EAS participating countries on AUKUS.
41. We reaffirmed our commitment to consolidate and strengthen the EAS on the basis of its established principles, objectives and modalities, ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-centred regional architecture, including the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles) in creating a peaceful environment for further enhancing cooperation and strengthening the existing bonds of friendship among EAS participating countries.

OTHER MATTERS

42. With a view to support ongoing efforts towards a comprehensive COVID-19 pandemic recovery and ensuring long-term resilience, we adopted the EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation; the EAS Leaders' Statement on Economic Growth through Tourism Recovery; and the EAS Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Recovery.
43. We looked forward to the convening of the 17th East Asia Summit in the Kingdom of Cambodia in 2022.