

2023 PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE 32ND ASEAN COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING AND ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' RETREAT

Jakarta, Indonesia, 3-4 February 2023

Note that all headings in this document are inserted by the CIL Database team for indexing purposes and are not part of the original text.

ASEAN PRIORITIES FOR 2023.....	2
ASEAN INSTITUTIONS.....	3
HUMAN RIGHTS.....	3
SOUTHEAST ASIA NUCLEAR WEAPON-FREE ZONE.....	3
ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY COOPERATION.....	3
ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY COOPERATION.....	4
ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY COOPERATION.....	5
ASEAN OUTLOOK ON THE INDO-PACIFIC.....	6
TRADE PARTNERSHIPS.....	6
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.....	7
ASEAN CONNECTIVITY.....	7
ASEAN CENTRALITY.....	7
TIMOR LESTE.....	8
UNCLOS.....	8
SOUTH CHINA SEA.....	8
CROSS STRAIT DEVELOPMENTS.....	9
KOREAN PENINSULA.....	9
MYANMAR.....	9
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.....	10
TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION.....	10

2023 PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE 32ND ASEAN COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING AND ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' RETREAT

Jakarta, Indonesia, 3-4 February 2023

1. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was convened on 4 February 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Retreat was the first major meeting under Indonesia's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023 with the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth. The meeting was preceded by the 32nd ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) Meeting under Indonesia's Chairmanship on 3 February 2023.

2. The meetings were also attended by Timor-Leste, signifying its first participation as part of the ASEAN Family, which in principle, is an 11th member of ASEAN, with the status of observer. ASEAN further welcomed Timor-Leste in embracing the path of ASEAN Community Building and reiterated the mutual interests and interdependence among the peoples of ASEAN, which are bound by geography, common objectives, and shared destiny.

ASEAN PRIORITIES FOR 2023¹

3. We had an in-depth discussion on ASEAN's priorities for the year 2023 and on ways to further strengthen the ASEAN Community, ASEAN unity and centrality, as well as ASEAN's external partnerships. We also exchanged views on regional and international developments and reaffirmed our shared commitments to promoting sustainable peace, security, stability, and prosperity within and beyond the region.

4. We reiterated our strong commitment to upholding regionalism and multilateralism and emphasised the importance of adhering to key principles, shared values and norms enshrined in the UN Charter, the ASEAN Charter, the Declaration on Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the TAC, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), the 2011 Declaration on the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP);

5. We discussed the follow-up to the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits and Related Summits, including, among others, the Recommendations on Strengthening ASEAN's Capacity and Institutional Effectiveness by the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus, and the ASEAN Leaders' Statement on the Application of Timor-Leste for ASEAN Membership.

6. We supported Indonesia's key priorities and deliverables in 2023, which are in line with the goals of ASEAN Community building and continue to build upon ongoing efforts of the previous ASEAN Chairmanship priorities.

¹ Note that all headings in this document are inserted by the CIL Database team for indexing purposes and are not part of the original text.

ASEAN INSTITUTIONS

7. We underscored ASEAN's commitment to be an organization that is robust and agile, equipped with strengthened capacity and institutional effectiveness to address the challenges in order to remain relevant and important for its people, the region, and the world while continuing to serve as the epicentre of growth to take up opportunities for the prosperity of its peoples and beyond the region. In that regard, we welcomed the Chairs' initiatives to follow up the HLTf's recommendations by providing several proposals that are critical for the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, among others, in relation to strengthening ASEAN decision-making process through establishing a SOM working group and for the said working group to conclude its work at the end of the Chairmanship, revising modalities for Chair of ASEAN and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to host all levels of meetings at the ASEAN premises; and on the strengthening of the East Asia Summit. We were also committed to strengthening the role and mandate of the CPR, enhancing the role of the Secretary-General of ASEAN, strengthening coordination of cross-pillar issues, and strengthening ASEAN funding, including through increasing equal annual contributions of ASEAN Member States to the Annual Operating Budget of the ASEAN Secretariat and conducting an in-depth study on the sufficiency of resources for the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Community-Building agenda. We also encouraged the Secretary-General of ASEAN to provide views to the ASEAN Leaders and Ministers from the office's vantage point.

HUMAN RIGHTS

8. We welcomed the successful convening of the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2022 in conjunction with the 10th Anniversary of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in November 2022. We took note of Indonesia's intention to host the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2023 in Indonesia. We further noted that the dialogue aims to provide a regional platform to exchange views among the ASEAN Member States and share best practices and experiences in promoting and protecting human rights in their respective countries. We also noted the proposal to continue this dialogue in the future, including Indonesia's initiative to institutionalize human rights dialogue.

SOUTHEAST ASIA NUCLEAR WEAPON-FREE ZONE

9. We reaffirmed the commitment to preserving the Southeast Asian Region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction to safeguard peace and security in the region. 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.

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY COOPERATION

10. We welcomed the adoption of the Concept Paper on the Development of an ASEAN Maritime Outlook (AMO) and looked forward to the publication of the first edition of the Outlook. The AMO will serve as a practical tool to understand regional maritime trends, strengthen synergies, and avoid duplication of work among relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies.

11. We expressed concern over the rising threats of Trafficking in Person (TIP) exacerbated by the misuse of technology. We emphasized the need to synergize various ASEAN mechanisms, modalities, and commitments and promote cross-pillar activities to address, prevent, and combat TIP. In this regard, we welcomed Indonesia's initiative to develop an ASEAN Leaders declaration to combat TIP caused by misuse of technology.

12. We noted the progress on the negotiation of the ASEAN Extradition Treaty and looked forward to its conclusion, which will complement the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters

(MLAT) in strengthening ASEAN's resilience and capacity to combat transnational crimes and enhancing cooperation within ASEAN.

13. We noted that the region's security and prosperity relied on the stability of our shared maritime domain. Therefore, we viewed the need to boost maritime security cooperation in our immediate region and beyond while maintaining ASEAN Centrality. We noted the convening of the 1st Heads of the ASEAN Coast Guard Meeting on 22-23 November 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. We encouraged further discussion on the establishment of the ASEAN Coast Guard Forum (ACF).

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY COOPERATION

14. We are determined to make Southeast Asia the center of regional economic growth and an engine for global growth through robust cooperation, including in the food, energy, health, and finance sectors, as reflected in the sub-theme of Indonesia's Chairmanship of Epicentrum of Growth.

15. We recalled the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy and reaffirmed our commitment to the overall implementation of the Declaration. The ASEAN Coordinating Council endorsed the High-Level Task Force on Economic Integration (HLTF-EI) to develop ASEAN Blue Economy Framework to operationalize the Declaration and advance Blue Economy as a new engine of economic growth for the region.

16. We acknowledged the impact of emerging challenges arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic and the current geopolitical tension, including food and energy security and financial stability. We reaffirmed our commitment to continue deepening the ASEAN economic integration, enhancing intra-ASEAN trade and investment, strengthening supply chain connectivity and implementing the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 further to achieve an economically integrated, competitive, connected, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive region, with a special emphasis on narrowing the development gap among its Member States.

17. We welcomed Indonesia's Priority Economic Deliverables and flagship initiatives under its chairmanship to address the immediate challenges in ensuring the region's recovery and rebuilding and further the momentum for ASEAN as an epicentre of growth through inclusive digital economy integration and sustainable economic growth.

18. We acknowledged the present challenges faced by ASEAN, such as climate change, pandemic, and geopolitical tension. We underscored the urgency for a mutual commitment between all sectors related to agriculture and food production, trade, as well as a logistic system to ensure ASEAN food security during these critical times and improve its resiliency towards future unprecedented situations. We recognized food security as a shared responsibility among AMS. To overcome the emerging risk of food crisis in ASEAN, we support the initiative to strengthen the food security in the region to bring attention to all related stakeholders to enhance collaboration, particularly in ensuring sustainable production and continued flow of food and maintaining the regional supply chains, as well as logistic system to secure the smooth distribution of agriculture and food products.

19. We reiterated ASEAN's commitment to pursuing energy transition and energy security agenda. We also recognized the importance of energy connectivity to achieve energy security and further encouraged the continuation of cooperation on energy interconnectivity, among others, through the implementation of the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) and Trans ASEAN Gas Pipeline (TAGP) to achieve energy security. We looked forward to an ASEAN declaration on sustainable energy security through interconnectivity.

20. We acknowledged the importance of managing ASEAN's economic stability amidst the current global situation. We supported ASEAN initiatives to foster economic recovery and ensure financial

stability and resilience, including enhancing regional health capacity, advancing innovative infrastructure financing, strengthening customs and tax cooperation, and promoting local currency transactions in the region.

20. We welcomed the ongoing implementation of the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap and looked forward to the expeditious completion of the study for the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA). In this regard, we looked forward to the adoption of an ASEAN Leaders' Statement to Develop the DEFA and the early commencement of DEFA negotiations to accelerate ASEAN's digital integration towards a regionally integrated economy.

21. We acknowledged the importance of digital payment and digital literacy in the digital economy to deepen ASEAN economic integration. We were committed to continuing to advance payment connectivity and promoting digital finance in ASEAN to support inclusive economic growth.

22. We highlighted the importance of the transition to zero-emission vehicles to support energy transition and sustainable transportation agenda. We acknowledged the role of electric vehicles in reducing emissions and supported ASEAN initiatives to develop an electric vehicle ecosystem in ASEAN.

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY COOPERATION

23. We reaffirmed our regional commitment to protect migrant workers in the entire migration cycle as enshrined in the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. We agreed to strengthen the protection of migrant workers through the adoption of an ASEAN Leaders' declaration regarding the protection of migrant workers in crisis situations and an ASEAN Leaders' declaration concerning the protection of migrants working in fishing vessels.

24. We underscored the importance of promoting rural development and poverty eradication and looked forward to rural empowerment and interconnectivity of rural-urban communities through the implementation of the ASEAN Master Plan on Rural Development 2022 to 2026 and by establishing the ASEAN Villages Network (AVN).

25. We reiterated our commitment to promoting the role and participation of Persons with Disabilities as reflected in the Bali Declaration 2011 and the implementation of ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, highlighting the importance of disability-inclusive development in the region. We looked forward to the adoption of an ASEAN declaration to strengthen disability-Inclusive development for a resilient and prosperous ASEAN Community.

26. We affirmed our commitment to strengthening regional health architecture beyond COVID- 19 towards achieving resilience in the ASEAN Community. In this regard, we agreed to expand the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to respond to other public health emergencies and emerging diseases. We also agreed to continue ASEAN health initiatives, including the early operationalisation of the ASEAN Center for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) and promote a comprehensive approach, utilizing existing ASEAN mechanisms where possible, including sustainable financing, dedicated to the prevention, preparedness, and response to potential future public health emergencies.

27. We agreed to promote one health approach mechanism in the region that considered simultaneous relations and complex interdependencies between the health of humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems to address emerging infectious diseases, including antimicrobial resistance.

28. 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 looked forward to the establishment and operationalization of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre on Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACCTHPC).

29. We recalled the Joint Declaration on the Framework to Minimize the Harmful Effects of Fake News in 2018 and the formation of the ASEAN Task Force on Fake News (TFFN) in 2022. To further strengthen the implementation of the TFFN, we agreed to support the development of the Guideline on Management of Government Information in Combatting Fake News and Disinformation in the Media.

ASEAN OUTLOOK ON THE INDO-PACIFIC

30. We recalled the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Mainstreaming Four Priority Areas of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific within ASEAN-Led Mechanisms and noted the Concept Note on the ASEAN Roadmap for Promoting ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. We emphasized the importance of taking concrete steps to realize the goals of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) that strengthen a rules-based framework, transparency, inclusivity, and non-intervention as well as complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks and guide ASEAN's engagement with its partners in ASEAN-led mechanisms, including through the convening of the ASEAN-Indo-Pacific Forum this year that will focus on creative economy, youth dialogue on digital development for sustainable development goals, infrastructure forum as well as business and investment summit.

31. We acknowledged the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) as the premier political and economic policy organization in the Pacific region, with two of its members being dialogue partners of ASEAN, namely Australia and New Zealand. We looked forward to further discussion on the possibility of establishing Secretariat-to-Secretariat cooperation between ASEAN and PIF.

TRADE PARTNERSHIPS

32. We recalled the adoption of the Joint Statement on the Substantial Conclusion of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Upgrade Negotiation and recognized that the upgraded AANZFTA would open up new opportunities as Parties to the Agreement have ensured it remains of high quality, responsive towards emerging challenges, takes into account modern trade practices, and remains commercially meaningful to businesses in the region. We therefore looked forward to the signing of the Second Protocol to Amend the Agreement Establishing the AANZFTA in 2023 to achieve tangible benefits from the upgraded AANZFTA.

33. We welcomed the implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement that contributes to economic recovery, inclusive, rules-based trade and investment arrangement. We reaffirmed our commitment to RCEP's full and effective

implementation and looked forward to the establishment of the interim RCEP Secretariat as a special unit within the ASEAN Secretariat, which could gradually transition into a stand-alone RCEP Secretariat, to strengthen the regional supply chain and contribute to ASEAN economic integration agenda.

34. We underscored the importance of the industrial sector as one of the main pillars of ASEAN's economy. Therefore, we reiterated our commitment to reviving the ASEAN industrial project-based initiatives that focus on forward-looking sectors and specific areas, taking into account technological advancements, private sector participation, intra-ASEAN complementarity, and collaboration with the

relevant Dialogue Partners and external parties, by developing a Framework for industrial project-based initiatives that promote industrial cooperation within the mainstream of ASEAN economic integration.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

35. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing sustainable development cooperation, both among the ASEAN Member States and between ASEAN and its partners. We reiterated our continued support for the effective implementation of the Complementarities Initiative and the work of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD) in furthering ASEAN's sustainable development agenda. We encouraged the acceleration of efforts in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals in view of the Decade of Action and the halfway point of the SDGs and looked forward to further exploring complementarity between the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision.

36. We realised the urgent need to strike a balance between economic growth and the conservation of natural resources. We underscored the importance for ASEAN to take urgent steps to implement the ASEAN Framework for a Circular Economy towards promoting a resilient economy and sustainable growth towards achieving the overall objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. We reiterated our commitment to sustainability as a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the livelihood of the people. We identified that the ASEAN Harmonised Standards support the achievement of SDGs 2030 as it enables all three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental) and is essential for AMS to reduce costs and increase productivity and efficiency. In this regard, we looked forward to developing a roadmap to support the SDGs implementation, which contributes to the complementary effort in the region to ensure the safety, health, and protection of the environment throughout ASEAN.

38. We recalled the initial idea to establish an ASEAN Green Deal at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits and Related Summits. We underscored the importance of developing a practical and actionable framework that allows ASEAN to make a gradual transition toward a green and sustainable future. We encouraged all relevant sectoral bodies to work closely together to consider the establishment of an ASEAN Green Deal.

ASEAN CONNECTIVITY

39. We acknowledged the achievements and ongoing efforts to fully implement the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing regional connectivity and agreed on the development of the ASEAN Connectivity Post-2025 Agenda. We underscored the importance of strengthening the engagement with private sectors, international and regional organizations, relevant stakeholders, and external partners, in supporting the implementation of MPAC 2025 and the development of the ASEAN Connectivity Post-2025 Agenda and its implementation.

ASEAN CENTRALITY

40. We also looked forward to the conclusion of the concept paper on the implementation of AOIP from a defense perspective, which will serve as a guide to enhance defense cooperation between ASEAN and its external partners while maintaining ASEAN centrality.

41. We emphasized the importance of ASEAN Centrality and Unity in our engagement with external partners through ASEAN-Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and ADMM-Plus. Building mutual trust and confidence is imperative in order to

strengthen a regional architecture centred on ASEAN that is open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based. In this regard, we looked forward to the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in Tokyo. We also noted Australia's proposal to convene a Special Summit to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations in Australia in 2024. Furthermore, we looked forward to exploring the possibility of an ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit to be held this year in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

42. We reaffirmed the importance of pursuing ASEAN's outward-looking, inclusive, and non-discriminatory approach and agreed on the need to reach out to 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. We supported Chair's proposal to designate the topic of the theme of "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth" in to agenda of the East Asia Summit, develop and finalize a simplified and streamlined document of EAS Plan of Action (2024-2028), have a single EAS Chair sponsored statement as the outcome of the East Asia Summit and further tasked CPR to follow up the recommendation of HLTF on ASEAN Community to discuss and finalize the Term of Reference for the East Asia Summit Ambassador in Jakarta.

TIMOR LESTE

43. We welcomed Timor-Leste's participation in ASEAN meetings at all levels, including Summit Plenaries. We further reaffirmed ASEAN's efforts to develop an objective criteria- based Roadmap for Timor-Leste's membership in ASEAN. In this regard, we adopted the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Observer Status Granted to Timor-Leste in ASEAN and the revised Terms of Reference of the ACC Working Group on Timor-Leste. We also encouraged the Timor-Leste government to intensify efforts towards the preparations for ASEAN membership while reaffirming ASEAN's commitment that all ASEAN Member States and external partners shall fully support capacity-building assistance and any other necessary and relevant support for Timor-Leste's membership in ASEAN.

UNCLOS

44. 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 recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

45. We welcomed the successful convening of the ASEAN Regional Conference on the 40th Anniversary of the 1982 UNCLOS: Promoting Legal Order for the Seas and Oceans in the ASEAN Secretariat on 29 November 2022, initiated by Indonesia. We reaffirmed that international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, is the basis for determining sovereignty, sovereign rights, and legitimate interests over maritime areas. We further reaffirmed that the 1982 UNCLOS 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.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

46. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations, recent developments and serious incidents, 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 DOC, that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

47. We reiterated the commitment of ASEAN and urged all parties to cooperate in a constructive and peaceful manner for the South China Sea to become a sea of peace, stability and prosperity. We looked forward to the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC in the South China Sea consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We welcomed the resumption of physical textual negotiations of the COC and appreciated Cambodia's efforts to host the 36th and 37th JWG-DOC in Cambodia. In this regard, Indonesia will host rounds of COC negotiation, the first of which will be in March 2023. We noted the need to find new strategies/approaches to speed up the process of the COC negotiation.

CROSS STRAIT DEVELOPMENTS

48. We discussed the cross-strait developments in which ASEAN remained concerned with its implications on regional stability which could lead to miscalculation, serious confrontation, open conflicts, and unpredictable consequences. ASEAN stands ready to play a constructive role in facilitating peaceful dialogue between all parties, including through utilizing ASEAN-led mechanisms to de-escalate tension, to safeguard peace, security and development in the area adjacent to our region.

KOREAN PENINSULA

49. We expressed grave concerns over the recent surge in DPRK's intercontinental ballistic missile testing and ballistic missile launches. We stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties in order to realize lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. We urged all concerned parties to exercise utmost restraint, avoid actions and military reciprocations that may escalate the situation, resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realization of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Diplomatic efforts, including the creation of a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties, should remain a priority. We reiterated our readiness to play a constructive role by utilizing ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue among the concerned parties.

MYANMAR

50. We noted that two years have passed since the military takeover of power in Myanmar and, in that regard, urged for significant progress in the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus to pave the way for an inclusive national dialogue in Myanmar. We stressed that inclusive national dialogue is key to finding a peaceful resolution to the situation in Myanmar. We also stressed that all stakeholders must create a conducive environment for an inclusive national dialogue by ceasing violence and ensuring the timely and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance.

51. We reaffirmed ASEAN's continued support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace, stability, and the rule of law, promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities, and promote sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State. We emphasized the need to facilitate the

voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure, and dignified manner. We appreciated the contribution from the ASEAN Member States and external partners in supporting the prioritized projects to facilitate the repatriation process and to promote inclusive and sustainable development in Rakhine State. We 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 facilitate the repatriation process effectively.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

52. We condemned in the strongest terms the acts by extremist, far-right politicians in certain countries of burning and desecrating the Holy Quran last month. This act of blasphemy has hurt and tarnished religious tolerance. Freedom of expression must be exercised in a responsible manner. We reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to continue encouraging dialogue and understanding and promoting the spirit of peaceful co-existence to achieve peace and harmony in a diverse global community.

TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION

53. 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 and as a foundation for maintaining regional peace and stability. We remain committed to further promoting the principles embodied in the TAC and emphasize the importance of all High Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Treaty. We noted the convening of the Workshop on the Geographical Scope and Application of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in the ASEAN Secretariat on 17 October 2022. We encouraged further in-depth deliberation on its scope and application of the TAC.
