

# **2024 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF ASEAN-CANADA SPECIAL SUMMIT ON ENHANCING ASEAN CONNECTIVITY AND RESILIENCE**

*Issued in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 10 October 2024*

1. The ASEAN-Canada Special Summit on Enhancing ASEAN Connectivity and Resilience was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 10 October 2024. The Summit was chaired by H.E. Mr. Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The Summit was attended by the ASEAN Member States, the Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, as well as Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as Observer. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance.
2. We reiterated our support for the Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship under the theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience," which aims to enhance ASEAN connectivity and resilience through intensifying ASEAN cooperation under the three Community pillars; promoting infrastructure connectivity, narrowing development gaps, promoting greater economic integration and people-to-people exchanges; and further strengthening ASEAN's relations with external partners, while maintaining ASEAN's relevance and ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture. In this regard, we adopted the ASEAN-Canada Joint Leaders' Statement on Enhancing ASEAN Connectivity and Resilience. We congratulated the Lao PDR on the successful convening of the 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and Related Meetings, from 24 to 27 July 2024, in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
3. We acknowledged several high-level exchanges between ASEAN and Canada, especially the convening of the ASEAN-Canada Summit to Launch the ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership on 6 September 2023, in Jakarta, Indonesia, whereby the Leaders adopted the Joint Leaders' Statement on the ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership, which formally launched the Strategic Partnership. We welcomed Canada's continued commitment to ASEAN Community building efforts, ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plans.
4. We noted with satisfaction that significant progress has been made in the fourth year of the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership (2021-2025). We encouraged ASEAN and Canada to further maximise efforts in fully implementing the activities under the Plan of Action, and looked forward to the development of a new Plan of Action (2026-2030) that will guide both sides in realising the full potential of the ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership over the next five years.
5. We underscored the significance of enhancing cooperation in the four priority areas of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) in an inclusive manner through concrete actions to support its implementation. Towards this end, we appreciated Canada's continued support and recognition for the AOIP. ASEAN agreed to continue encouraging Canada to support and undertake substantive, practical and tangible cooperation with ASEAN in the four priority areas through concrete projects, activities and workstreams.

6. We noted that political-security engagement between ASEAN and Canada continues to strengthen on multiple fronts, including through Canada's participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference with Canada, and the ASEAN Plus Canada Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC + Canada) Consultation. Cognisant of the conclusion of the ASEAN-Canada Work Plan to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime (2019-2023), we took note that the development of the renewed draft SOMTC + Canada Work Plan is ongoing and looked forward to its adoption.
7. We noted with appreciation Canada's increased engagement in the ARF, including Canada's co-chairmanship of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ISM on ICTs Security), as well as the ARF Open-Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs (OESG) with the Philippines for the Inter-Sessional period 2024-2027.
8. We acknowledged Canada's current engagement with the ASEAN defence sector through the observership programme in ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), as well as on Maritime Security (MS) during the final segment of the 2021-2024 cycle. We further noted that Canada has submitted a new application to become an observer in the same two EWGs for the 2024-2027 cycle.
9. We welcomed Canada's continued support for the advancement of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in the region, including through the Regional Programme on WPS through the 'Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in ASEAN – Advancing WPS in ASEAN' project. We commended Canada's efforts to raise the profile of the WPS agenda in the region, including by supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action (RPA) on WPS as well as convening a series of dialogues with various stakeholders.
10. We underlined the importance of further enhancing ASEAN-Canada trade and investment through the implementation of the 2021-2025 Work Plan to implement the ASEAN-Canada Joint Declaration on Trade and Investment (JDTI) as well as various activities pursued by the Canada-ASEAN Business Council (CABC). On the ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement (ACAFTA) negotiations, we recalled that the 13th ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM)-Canada Consultation on 20 September 2024 had noted the target for substantial conclusion of the negotiations in 2025, and urged officials to intensify the work, hold more in-person negotiating rounds, and find common ground on the outstanding issues. In this regard, we looked forward to the continuation of positive developments in the negotiations towards a commercially meaningful ACAFTA for all stakeholders, to progressively improve market access for the private sector from ASEAN and Canada, and connect ASEAN and Canada more closely with global value chains. We welcomed the financial support for the participation of ASEAN's Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Member States in the ACAFTA negotiating rounds hosted by Canada through the ASEAN-Canada Plan of Action Trust Fund. We also welcomed the technical assistance provided by Canada through the Expert Deployment Mechanism for Trade and Development (EDM) to support the ACAFTA negotiations. We welcomed the Team Canada Trade Missions to the Indo-Pacific to strengthen business links between both sides.
11. We welcomed Canada's continued support for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the region, including through increased access to financing and other funding support mechanisms made available for ASEAN MSMEs, digital start-ups and women entrepreneurs and digital transformation. We noted that facilitating opportunities for MSMEs to collaborate on innovation and business-oriented research and development (R&D) partnership is one of ASEAN-Canada's efforts to support key areas of cooperation under the AOIP.

12. We reiterated our shared commitment to further strengthening ASEAN-Canada economic partnership, including through upholding the multilateral trading system, enhancing regional economic integration, and underscoring the importance of multilateralism and free trade.
13. We recognised Canada's role as an important player in the global and regional food security, and noted that Canada has further agreed to support ASEAN's efforts in preventing disruptions in the supply chain in times of crises. We encouraged Canada to share information and best practices on enhancing agriculture productivity and food security. In this spirit, we welcomed the launch of Canada's Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Office in Manila, the Philippines, in February this year, to support the implementation of the ASEAN-Canada Joint Leaders' Statement on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises adopted in September 2023.
14. We welcomed Canada's continued commitment for ASEAN's regional efforts in strengthening policies to protect migrant workers and their family members, through the Tripartite Action for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in the ASEAN Region (TRIANGLE in ASEAN) Programme, including the annual conduct of the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) and development of the ASEAN Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits for Migrant Workers. We appreciated the support of the TRIANGLE in ASEAN to the development of the ASEAN Declaration and Guidelines on Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations, ASEAN Declaration and Guidelines on Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers, Vientiane Declaration on Skills Mobility, Recognition, and Development for Migrant Workers and its Checklist, as well as Workshop and compilation of good practices on employers' education programmes on fair recruitment and decent employment of migrant workers.
15. We welcomed Canada's continued support for organisations in the ASEAN region through the Canadian Trade and Investment Facility for Development (CTIF), which to date has supported five projects with ASEAN and twelve projects with various ASEAN Member States, as well as a project with Timor-Leste.
16. We commended Canada's sustained and expanded cooperation on regional health security through the Mitigation of Biological Threats (MBT) Programme that was initiated in 2014 with the ASEAN Health Sector. As we celebrated the programme's 10th anniversary and with its third programme phase having commenced in April 2024, further enhancement of regional capacities in preventing, detecting, and responding to biological threats is anticipated, such as the operationalisation of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity and the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), which are among the health-related deliverables during the ASEAN Chairmanship of the Lao PDR.
17. We appreciated Canada's technical assistance to the ASEAN Tourism Marketing Partnership Working Group and the ASEAN Secretariat, from November 2022 to November 2023, to undertake the Intra-ASEAN Tourism Recovery Campaign in order to promote travel within the region and help support economies in their recovery efforts. We looked forward to more initiatives and cooperation to promote tourism, sports, culture and arts exchanges, to strengthen people-to-people connections as a foundation for the ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership.
18. We encouraged the strengthening of ASEAN-Canada cooperation on culture and arts, including through cultural exchange and knowledge-sharing activities such as cultural festivals, exhibitions, film festivals, media exchanges, and enhance cooperation on managing intangible and tangible culture heritage.

19. We welcomed Canada's technical assistance in the development of a study on "Promoting the Production of Sustainable Aviation Fuels from Agricultural Wastes in the ASEAN region," which is aimed at enhancing the energy sector's capacity to evaluate the reliability of upstream feedstock supply and the potential for sustainable utilisation and production within the region.
20. We encouraged Canada to support the establishment of the ASEAN Power Grid.
21. We appreciated the Canada-ASEAN Scholarships and Educational Exchanges for Development (SEED) initiative, which has provided 616 scholarships for students from ASEAN Member States to study and conduct research in Canada since September 2018. We encouraged Canada to continue and expand education and training cooperation with ASEAN, through on-going programmes, such as SEED and new programmes on higher education catered to ASEAN's growing education demands such as in digital skills, healthcare, science and technology, which will be crucial in developing the expertise needed to address emerging challenges.
22. We encouraged further enhancing ASEAN-Canada cooperation on good governance and civil service matters in support of the implementation of the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM) Work Plan to further realise a future-ready ASEAN Civil Service, and as a follow-up to the ACCSM's study visit to Canada, as organised by the Public Service Commission and Global Affairs Canada in March 2019.
23. We welcomed Canada's support for the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in its efforts to increase women's political participation in the region, including through the development of a plan of action on the promotion of women's political participation.
24. We commended Canada's support for the development of the KnowASCC platform through its Local Development Initiative Fund. As a user-friendly and comprehensive knowledge hub, the KnowASCC aim to enhance awareness and understanding of ASCC initiatives and contribute to evidence-based policymaking in the region.
25. We encouraged strengthening ASEAN-Canada cooperation to address transboundary haze pollution through full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP), including through the collaboration with the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) and the establishment and the operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution (ACCTHPC).
26. We appreciated Canada's support for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme (2021-2025) through the ASEAN Protection, Resilience, and Inclusion for Multi-Hazard Emergencies (ASEAN-PRIME) project, which is implemented by the AHA Centre. We encouraged Canada to continue supporting the implementation of AADMER Work Programme (2021-2025).
27. We also recognised Canada's newest support to ASEAN through their contribution to the AHA Centre for the initiative "Building Regional Resilience Through Anticipatory Action and Civil Society Empowerment" (ASEAN-BRACE), which will provide \$5 million (Canadian dollars) over four years (2024-2028) to support the AHA Centre to strengthen disaster risk resilience in region.

28. We commended Canada's strong support for the conduct of the 3rd ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit and Pre-Summit Events that were held on 21-24 August 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Guided by the theme, "Strengthening Care Economy and Resilience Towards ASEAN Community Post-2025", the Summit is one of the Lao PDR's priority deliverables during its term as ASEAN Chair. We looked forward to Canada's continuing support for ASEAN's work on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.
29. We also expressed support for ASEAN's efforts in narrowing the development gaps, including through the effective and substantive implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025) and its successor documents, and in enhancing development among ASEAN's sub-region, including the Mekong sub-region, which would contribute to promoting sustainable and equitable development and inclusive growth across the region.
30. We recognised the importance of further enhancing regional connectivity by supporting the implementation of the initiatives in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, as well as promoting links and synergies between MPAC 2025 and other connectivity strategies through ASEAN's Connecting the Connectivities approach. We agreed that the ASEAN-Canada Strategic Partnership should retain a strategic focus on enhancing connectivity in line with the five strategic areas of MPAC 2025, namely sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility. We looked forward to continued engagement and support from Canada in the development of the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan for the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its future implementation.
31. We encouraged Canada to work with ASEAN in supporting ASEAN Centres of Excellence across the three ASEAN Community pillars, such as the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE), ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE), ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR), and ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC).
32. We commended Malaysia for the achievements made during its Country Coordinatorship of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations for the period 2021-2024 and welcomed the Lao PDR as the new Country Coordinator.