

2024 VIENTIANE JOINT DECLARATION OF THE ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS' MEETING ON ASEAN: TOGETHER FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Adopted in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 20 November 2024

1. The Eighteenth ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (hereinafter referred to as "ADMM"), was convened on 20 November 2024 in Vientiane, the Lao People's Democratic Republic;
2. **RECOGNISING** that the complexity posed by geopolitical and geostrategic dynamics affect regional and global peace and stability;
3. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that traditional and non-traditional security threats, including the impacts of climate change, energy insecurity and food scarcity, along with social and cultural changes, the deceleration of the global economic growth, and the advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have continued to pose challenges to the peace, stability and security in the region and beyond;
4. **RECOGNISING** that the multi-faceted impacts of climate change phenomenon, including extreme weather events and other climate-related disasters, are occurring with increasing frequency, intensity, and severity;
5. **INSPIRED** by the efforts and commitments of ASEAN Member States (AMS) in effectively responding to common security challenges, in order to contribute to maintaining regional peace, security and development, and further contribute to enhancing regional resilience;
6. **UNDERSCORING** the importance of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus as the integral parts of the regional security architecture, which provide frameworks for strategic defence dialogue and practical cooperation with ASEAN at the centre;
7. **REITERATING** that ASEAN is an outward-looking Community that values engagement and cooperation with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and friends through ASEAN-led mechanisms to promote mutual trust and confidence, while upholding and strengthening ASEAN Centrality and unity, thus contributing to the common objective of maintaining peace and security, as well as enhancing the resilience of the region and beyond;
8. **REAFFIRMING** our adherence to the fundamental principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter, ASEAN Charter, and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in strengthening ASEAN Centrality and unity, and reinforcing a rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre that upholds international law for the benefit of the people; as well as the central role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in enhancing defence and security cooperation and confidence-building measures with its partners;
9. **REAFFIRMING** the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) as a guideline for ASEAN in its engagement with external partners;
10. **COMMENDING** the progress and achievements of all ADMM initiatives, which are reflected in the implementation of the ADMM Work Programme 2023-2026 and contribute to AMS' joint efforts in realising the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025;

11. **SUPPORTING** the full implementation of the Five-Point Consensus in Myanmar and recalling Myanmar's commitment to finding a peaceful and durable solution to the current situation;
12. **REITERATING** the commitment of all parties to cooperating in a constructive and peaceful manner to maintain the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, and prosperity through the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), within a mutually-agreed timeline. In addition, the parties are committed to promoting maritime security, safety and freedom of navigation and overflight and creating a conducive environment for the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea;
13. **COMMENDING** the achievements of the seven ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWGs), namely on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Maritime Security (MS), Military Medicine (MM), Counter-Terrorism (CT), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), and Cyber Security (CS) in the 2021-2023 cycle, which significantly contributed to the promotion of mutual capacity-building and interoperability among ADMM-Plus Countries;
14. **NOTING** the progress of military cooperation under the ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces' Meeting (ACDFM) and its related meetings and activities to promote mutual trust, understanding, confidence-building and capacity-building among the Defence Forces of AMS;
15. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the outcomes of the 17th Annual Meeting of the Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI), as well as its role of Track II defence diplomacy in providing relevant input and recommendations in tackling current and emerging defence and security challenges;
16. **WELCOMING** Timor-Leste's continued commitment to the implementation of the Roadmap for Timor-Leste's Full Membership in ASEAN adopted at the 42nd ASEAN Summit, including through its participation as an observer in the ADMM, ADMM-Plus and related meetings and activities at all levels. At the same time, **CONTINUING** to provide capacity-building assistance, as well as encouraging ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and other external partners to support Timor-Leste while emphasising the need for Timor-Leste to achieve more practical progress that could fulfil the basic needs towards regional integration and Community-building efforts.
17. **NOTING** the effective implementation of the Observership Programme in 2023, where Canada, France and the United Kingdom (UK) took part as observers in the ADMM-Plus EWGs' capacity-building activities, reflecting the ADMM-Plus as an open and inclusive platform that is ASEAN-centred.

HEREBY DECLARES TO:

1. **STRENGTHEN** ASEAN Centrality and unity, and the proactive role of ASEAN as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with its external partners in a regional architecture that is open, transparent and inclusive;
2. **DEEPEN** defence and security cooperation and engagement between the ADMM and Plus Countries with ASEAN at the centre, in order to effectively respond to common security challenges faced by the region;

3. **UNDERSCORE** the significance of maintaining regional peace, stability, security, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea; pursuing peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability;
4. **EMPHASISE** the need for the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS while underlining the full and effective implementation of the DOC in the South China Sea in its entirety, thus commending existing confidence-building measures such as Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, Guidelines for Air Military Encounters, Guidelines for Maritime Interaction, ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure and other related activities under the DOC framework to promote communication, mutual trust and confidence and to reduce tensions and the risk of accidents, misunderstandings and miscalculation in the air and at sea;
5. **RECOGNISE** ASEAN's ongoing efforts and the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus to facilitate the restoration of peace and stability and the peaceful transition to normalcy in Myanmar, and towards this end, reiterate the need for a full implementation of the Five-Point Consensus;
6. **WELCOME** the designation of Defence Focal Points to encourage synergy and streamlining of ADMM and ADMM-Plus initiatives in a sustainable and resource-efficient manner;
7. **ADOPT** the ADMM-Plus EWGs Observership Protocol, which reaffirms ASEAN Centrality, as well as facilitates the participation and contribution of non-Plus Countries and other external partners to trust, confidence and capacity-building under the ADMM-Plus EWGs;
8. **APPROVE** the Strategy Paper on a Future-Ready ADMM and ADMM-Plus, which will guide the ADMM and ADMM-Plus defence engagement in support of ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Development of Strategic Plans to Implement ASEAN Community Vision 2045;
9. **APPROVE** the Concept Note on Maritime Cooperation and Connectivity Conference as the pilot project of the Concept Paper on the Implementation of the AOIP from a Defence Perspective;
10. **APPROVE** the Concept Note on the 2nd ASEAN-United States Maritime Exercise;
11. **WELCOME** the Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on the ADMM's Accomplishments in the Implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, which demonstrates notable developments and tangible outcomes, contributing to building capacity and resilience, and maintaining peace and security of the region;
12. **WELCOME** the Joint Statement of the 11th ADMM-Plus, which reaffirms the commitment of the ADMM-Plus to further enhancing capabilities through exploring potential cooperation to address the challenges of climate change in an effective and coordinated manner;
13. **WELCOME** the adoption of the new Work Plans of ADMM-Plus EWGs for the 2024-2027 cycle and **LOOK FORWARD** to their successful implementation;
14. **SUPPORT** the proposed incorporation of the Standard Operating Procedure of the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief as an annex to Chapter VI of the Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations, in view of enhancing civil-military coordination;

15. **ENCOURAGE** the full implementation of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Observer Status Granted to Timor-Leste in ADMM, ADMM-Plus and Its Related Meetings, in order to assist Timor-Leste in its preparation and processes to achieve full membership in ASEAN after its full and effective fulfilment of all Roadmap criteria;
16. **REITERATE** the importance of multilateralism and regionalism within the framework of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus in reaffirming ASEAN unity and resilience in addressing common challenges, in order to maintain peace and security of the region and beyond;
17. **EXPRESS** the highest appreciation to the Republic of Indonesia for its Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023 and to the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the current ASEAN Chairmanship in 2024;
18. **WELCOME** Malaysia as the next ASEAN Chair and its hosting of the 19th ADMM and the 12th ADMM-Plus in 2025;

DONE on this Twentieth Day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty Four, in a single original copy in the English language.