

2024 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING ON TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Adopted in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 28 August 2024

1. The Eighteenth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (18th AMMTC) was convened in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 28 August 2024. The Meeting was preceded by the Preparatory ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) for the 18th AMMTC on 27 August 2024. The Meeting was chaired by Lao PDR, under the theme of "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience".
2. We exchanged views and reaffirmed our commitment to the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action (PoA) in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025). We were pleased to note the progress of implementation of the SOMTC Work Programme (2022-2025) to implement this PoA and looked forward to the robust and full implementation of its ten components. We welcomed the extension of the period of implementation of the SOMTC Work Programme (2022-2024) to 2025 to be aligned with the remaining implementation period of the PoA.
3. We noted the outcomes and progress of meetings under the purview of the AMMTC, including the 24th SOMTC and Its Related Meetings, convened in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 26-28 June 2024; the 27th ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting (DGICM) and Its Related Meetings, convened in Nha Trang, Viet Nam, on 15 August 2024; and the Preparatory SOMTC for the 18th AMMTC, convened in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 27 August 2024.
4. We welcomed the progress of the review of priority areas of AMMTC undertaken by SOMTC, in view of the final review of implementation of the ASEAN PoA in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025) and the development of a renewed PoA. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in leading the review of priority areas of AMMTC.
5. We adopted the Concept Note on the Establishment of the SOMTC Working Group on People Smuggling and welcomed the establishment of this Working Group as a platform to strengthen regional capacity and improve efforts in combating people smuggling in the ASEAN region. We commended the efforts undertaken by Malaysia in leading the development of the Concept Note and looked forward to its inaugural Meeting.
6. We adopted the Guidelines on Effective Coordination for the Focal Points of the AMMTC and Its Subsidiary Mechanisms, in order to support the operationalisation of the work of and effectively handle the increasing coordination tasks within the subsidiary bodies under the AMMTC. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in leading the development of the Guidelines.
7. We adopted the Guidelines of Practices and Protocols for the AMMTC and Its Subsidiary Mechanisms, to serve as a reference for ASEAN Member States in hosting meetings of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and its subsidiary mechanisms. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in leading the development of the Guidelines.
8. We adopted the Template of Concept Notes for Initiatives under the AMMTC and Its Subsidiary Mechanisms to streamline the format, structure and content of all concept notes for proposed practical activities under the AMMTC. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in leading the development of the Template.

9. We adopted the Updated Terms of Reference (TOR) of the AMMTC, cognisant of the recent development of practices and processes within the sectoral body. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in reviewing the TOR that was adopted by the 11th AMMTC in 2017 as well as in updating the TOR.

10. We adopted the Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Law Enforcement Cooperation Against Online Job Scams to reaffirm the shared commitment to tackle online job scams and associated crimes, through concerted and sustained efforts under existing mechanism. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in leading the development of the Declaration.

11. We endorsed the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Enhanced Cooperation to Combat illicit Drug Trafficking and Precursor Chemicals aimed to strengthen our shared commitment to effectively prevent and counter illicit drug production, processes, trafficking and abuse in ASEAN. We commended the endeavour undertaken by Lao PDR in leading the development of the Statement.

12. We recognised the ongoing efforts to advance cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination in ASEAN and commended the valuable contributions of SOMTC and the DGICM in various initiatives led by other sectors. We looked forward to the continued active roles of SOMTC and the DGICM in leading as well as supporting various cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation.

13. We commended the smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming Country Coordinators for ASEAN-Dialogue Partner relations, to continue our collaborative efforts in combatting transnational crime with the Dialogue Partners. We further commended SOMTC and the DGICM for their commitment in exploring and implementing practical and operational forms of cooperation as guided by the respective work plans with the Dialogue Partners. We also welcomed the adoption of the TOR of the ASEAN-Russia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (ARJWG on CT) and commended Lao PDR for leading the initiative.

14. We welcomed Malaysia as the incoming Chair of the AMMTC and looked forward to the convening of the 25th SOMTC and the 19th AMMTC, along with all related meetings in 2025. We also welcomed Brunei Darussalam as the Chair of the DGICM and looked forward to the convening of the 28th DGICM and Its Related Meetings in 2025.

15. We expressed our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, especially the Ministry of Public Security, for the warm hospitality accorded to us and our respective delegations, and the excellent arrangements of the 18th AMMTC and Its Related Meetings. The Meeting was convened in the traditional ASEAN spirit of solidarity and cordiality.