



JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 53rd ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

1. We, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met on 9 September 2020 at the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) via videoconference. We acknowledged that the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has caused a severe and multi-dimensional impact on the region, and expressed our optimism that ASEAN Community building efforts will continue apace with ASEAN's strong mettle and self-reliance, as well as with the support of our external partners. We underscored the need for ASEAN to uphold the spirit of a cohesive and responsive ASEAN Community to further strengthen cooperation and advance our partnerships to ensure resilience and sustainable development in Southeast Asia and beyond.

ASEAN COMMUNITY BUILDING

ASEAN Community Vision 2025

2. We reaffirmed our commitment towards the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the *ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN: Rising above Challenges and Sustaining Growth*. We underscored the importance of maintaining ASEAN Centrality and unity in our community-building efforts, while enhancing our engagement with external partners. Amidst the unprecedented challenges and grave socio-economic impact brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we commended the ongoing work of all ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Organs for progress achieved in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprints 2025, and welcomed the progress on the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the three ASEAN Community Blueprints in 2020. We highlighted the importance of a whole-of-ASEAN approach in responding to COVID-19 including through a holistic, comprehensive, inclusive and practical ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.
3. 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).

4. We reaffirmed our belief that regionalism and multilateralism are important principles and frameworks of cooperation, and that their strength and value lie in their inclusivity, rules-based nature, and emphasis on mutual benefit and respect.

Key Deliverables

Review of the Implementation of the ASEAN Charter

5. We recognised the importance of conducting a review of the implementation of the ASEAN Charter in order to have a comprehensive assessment of the organisation and functions of ASEAN institutional structure and the application of rules and procedures that govern the operations of ASEAN as established under the ASEAN Charter and looked forward to the completion of a Scoping Report on this exercise. This review, together with the ongoing MTR of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 is expected to contribute to the development of the recommendations for the ASEAN Community Post-2025 Vision. We tasked the Senior Officials' to work expeditiously on the Scoping Report on the Review and submit their recommendations to the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) for further guidance.

Mid-term Review of the ASEAN Community Blueprints

6. We were pleased with the progress of the MTR of the three ASEAN Community Blueprints as it is an important exercise to assess progress to date, address gaps and challenges, and enhance the implementation of the Blueprints towards realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. We also looked forward to the completion of the MTR of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 by the end of this year. It will also provide useful lessons and insights on the future direction of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, taking into consideration emerging new issues. The MTRs shall likewise serve as the foundation for ASEAN Community-building efforts beyond 2025. We urged all relevant sectoral bodies under the three ASEAN Community Pillars to redouble their efforts to carry out a comprehensive review to be ready for submission to the Leaders at the 37th ASEAN Summit.

Post-2025 Vision

7. We welcomed the initiative to undertake discussions on an ASEAN Community Post-2025 Vision, including a Special Senior Officials' Meeting, a Multi-sectoral Senior Officials' Discussion and a multi-stakeholder consultative dialogue for this purpose. With the results of the MTRs of the ASEAN Community Blueprints and MPAC 2025 and the progress on the Scoping Report on the Review of Implementation of the ASEAN Charter further informing and providing insights on subsequent discussions on the post-2025 vision, ASEAN will have the opportunity to collaborate on how best to chart the future direction of our Community-building beyond 2025 amidst a rapidly changing global and regional strategic environment. With contributions from

ASEAN sectoral bodies and stakeholders, we looked forward to continue discussing the way forward in developing an ASEAN Community post-2025 vision with a view to submitting our recommendations, including a proposed Leaders' statement, to the 37th ASEAN Summit.

Enhanced ASEAN Image and Visibility

8. We took note of the assessment conducted by the ASEAN Secretariat on promoting the display of the ASEAN Flag in ASEAN Member States and the use of the ASEAN Anthem at ASEAN official functions. We were determined to continue promoting ASEAN identity and awareness among its peoples and enhancing ASEAN's visibility. We encouraged the use of the ASEAN Anthem at all ASEAN official functions.

Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

9. We noted with deep concern the continued human cost and suffering as well as profound socio-economic impact of COVID-19, and acknowledged the ongoing whole-of-government efforts of ASEAN Member States as well as a proactive whole-of-community approach by ASEAN in advancing its collective efforts to respond to COVID-19 thus far. We further noted the important coordinating role of the ACC and the active work of the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE), as well as the work of the ASEAN health sectoral body and other relevant sectoral bodies, which demonstrate ASEAN's solidarity and ability to address unprecedented challenges of this pandemic in a coordinated multi-sectoral, cross-pillar and multi-stakeholder manner.
10. We expressed our commitment to expedite the implementation of the outcomes of the Special ASEAN Summit and the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April 2020, as well as the 36th ASEAN Summit on 26 June 2020, all of which reaffirmed ASEAN's resolve to effectively prevent, detect, control and respond to the spread of COVID-19 and address its severe and multi-faceted challenges. To this end, we encouraged effective operationalisation of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. We looked forward to further progress on the various initiatives to respond to COVID-19, such as the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies (RRMS) for Public Health Emergencies and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Public Health Emergencies, as well as the ASEAN Centre on Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases.
11. As instructed by the Leaders at the 36th ASEAN Summit, we underscored the need for ASEAN to expeditiously develop a comprehensive recovery framework to move forward ASEAN's COVID-19 recovery efforts with a view to mitigating the profound and multidimensional impact of the pandemic, preserving supply chain connectivity, supporting economic recovery and improving stability and resilience of the region's economy, while staying vigilant of subsequent waves of infections. We commended the progress in the work undertaken by ACCWG-PHE, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, in the development of an ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan. We emphasised the need to keep

- the process inclusive and participatory, taking a whole-of-ASEAN-Community approach, with contributions from all Community Pillars and relevant stakeholders. We also looked forward to the submission of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan to the 37th ASEAN Summit.
12. We underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN's cooperation with its Dialogue Partners, external partners and international organisations to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and other public health emergencies. We recalled the holding of Special Ministerial meetings with Dialogue Partners, including Australia, China, the European Union (EU), Russia and the United States (U.S.) via videoconference to discuss cooperation to address the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact, including through building and maintaining resilient, open and connected supply chains, as well as contributions to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.
 13. We called for enhanced collaboration and sharing of experience with ASEAN's partners in research, development, production, and distribution of vaccines, providing access to medicines for COVID-19 and other diseases in future public health emergencies, and making them available and affordable to all as global public goods.
 14. On the economic front, we recognised the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19 through widespread supply chain disruptions, job losses, and demand shocks. We reiterated our commitment to keep our markets open for trade and investment, promote and accelerate trade facilitation efforts, as well as facilitation of investment, and refrain from imposing unnecessary non-tariff measures to ensure supply chain connectivity, particularly for food, medicines, medical supplies, and other essential products; we commended the coordination and efforts by various sectoral bodies on measures towards reopening and recovery. We acknowledged the need to remain vigilant to potential risks and foster cooperation among ASEAN Member States to ensure regional resilience, including through promoting food security, energy security, and financial stability. We looked forward to the implementation of the adopted Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We noted the need to leverage the potential of the intra-ASEAN market in supporting swift economic recovery in the region, and acknowledged the role of the private sector to promote investment confidence and business opportunities, which would contribute to this effort.
 15. We encouraged the maintenance of necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating, to the extent possible, the essential movement of people, including business travels, while ensuring the safeguarding of public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic.
 16. We also acknowledged the joint efforts and continued commitment of the labour, education, transport, sports, social welfare, development, tourism and health sectors in their collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, we welcomed the adoption of the *Joint Statement of the ASEAN Tourism Ministers on Strengthening Cooperation to Revitalise ASEAN Tourism* on 29 April 2020. We also welcomed the adoption of the *Joint Statement of the*

ASEAN Labour Ministers on Response to the Impact of COVID-19 on Labour and Employment on 14 May 2020. We also welcomed the *Joint Statement of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development on Mitigating Impacts of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Groups in ASEAN* on 10 June 2020. We looked forward to the adoption of the Joint Statement of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE) at its Special Online Meeting on Reducing Poverty and Building Resilience Towards COVID-19 Recovery. We also commended the collaboration between the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Sports with the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)*, under the auspices of the ASEAN-FIFA MOU, in undertaking the Joint Awareness Raising Campaign on COVID-19 to promote health and well-being of ASEAN citizens amidst the pandemic; the Regional Collaborative Strategy for ASEAN Drug Security and Self Reliance, and the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance; and the ongoing *Rapid Assessment for ASEAN: Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Livelihoods of ASEAN Populations*. We also recognised that COVID-19 may affect our collaboration to counter transnational crime and looked forward to the enhanced efforts by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) to respond to these challenges.

17. In order to advance ASEAN's work despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we welcomed the increased use of videoconferencing facilities to conduct ASEAN-related meetings, including the finalisation of Modalities for Organising ASEAN-related Meetings through Videoconference to ensure ASEAN's work continues in an efficient and effective manner.

Initiative for ASEAN Integration

18. We reaffirmed the importance of narrowing the development gap within ASEAN, including the digital gap, especially when COVID-19 has affected the livelihoods of our peoples, particularly vulnerable groups in ASEAN.
19. We were pleased with the progress in the implementation of the IAI Work Plan III (2016-2020), with 22 out of 26 actions (84.6%) being addressed, to assist Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV) to meet ASEAN-wide targets and commitments towards realising the goals of the ASEAN Community, and the ongoing efforts on the completion of the Work Plan. We looked forward to a focused and pragmatic IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025) that would address current challenges, advance development, narrow the divide within ASEAN and enhance ASEAN's competitiveness as a region.

Sub-regional cooperation

20. We acknowledged the important role and contribution of sub-regional cooperation frameworks such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Viet Nam (CLMV) cooperation, the Cambodia-Laos-Viet Nam Development Triangle Area, and Singapore-Johor-Riau (SIJORI) Growth Triangle. We encouraged closer coordination between ASEAN sectoral

bodies and sub-regional cooperation frameworks in achieving our goal of narrowing the development gap among and within ASEAN Member States.

21. We held a Special Session of the ASEAN Coordinating Council on ASEAN's sub-regional development on 9 September 2020. We emphasised the importance of ASEAN Centrality in promoting ASEAN's sub-regional development with the view to ensuring sustainable, equitable development, and narrowing the development gap within ASEAN. We noted the ASEAN Senior Officials' discussion on the outcome of the ASEAN Forum on Sub-Regional Development: Converging Mekong sub-regional cooperation with ASEAN goals. We welcomed and encouraged efforts by sub-regional cooperation frameworks, including in the Mekong area, such as the ACMECS, as well as BIMP-EAGA and IMT-GT, to promote equitable and sustainable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN.

ASEAN Connectivity

22. We acknowledged the importance of enhancing ASEAN Connectivity and in this regard, we commended the progress of the MPAC 2025 implementation through the concerted efforts of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC), National Coordinators, National Focal Points, relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, Dialogue Partners and other external partners. We called on our external partners and relevant stakeholders to strengthen sustainable infrastructure in the region by, among others, investing in and bolstering implementation of projects in the Initial Rolling Priority Pipeline of Potential ASEAN Infrastructure Projects, and supporting efforts to utilise the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS). We welcomed the finalisation of the Framework for Improving ASEAN Infrastructure Productivity to support sustainable infrastructure efforts. We underscored the need for strengthening supply chain connectivity and human capital development for growth and recovery. In this regard, we looked forward to the completion of the ASEAN Database on Trade Routes and Framework for Enhancing Supply Chain Efficiency by the end of 2020, and noted the ongoing efforts to build future-ready skills through technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education.
23. We underlined the importance of greater collaboration and synergy between and among the MPAC 2025, ASEAN Smart Cities Network and relevant connectivity initiatives, including through the Connecting the Connectivities approach, and further explore ways and means to implement such collaboration through concrete actions to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. We looked forward to the conclusion of the MTR of the MPAC 2025 and its recommendations to strengthen implementation, which will be submitted to the ACC for consideration.

Promoting Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

24. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing sustainable development cooperation, including with Dialogue Partners and external partners, by

promoting the Complementarities Initiative. We commended Thailand for its leadership as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation and reiterated our continued support for the effective implementation of the Complementarities Roadmap (2020-2025) and for the work of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD). We acknowledged the outcomes of the 4th High Level Brainstorming Dialogue (HLBD) which encouraged ASEAN to build back better from the multi-dimensional impact of COVID-19 and underscored the importance of protecting peoples' health and well-being, supporting sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, restoring and building sustainable supply chains, promoting human capital development, leveraging digitalisation and technology, as well as strengthening multi-stakeholder and comprehensive partnerships.

ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)

25. We underscored the potential of the ASCN to create opportunities for the development of technological and innovative solutions to support the smart and sustainable development of cities in the region, while promoting greater cultural understanding. In this regard, we welcomed the outcomes of the Third ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) Annual Meeting on 17 July 2020, including the endorsement of the ASCN Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the Guidelines for ASCN Engagement with External Partners. We were pleased with the continued efforts by the ASCN Cities to implement their respective Smart City Action Plans (SCAPs). We commended the work of the ASCN in strengthening its institutional mechanisms to assist the ASCN Cities in monitoring progress of their SCAPs, fostering partnerships, and exploring collaboration with other platforms on smart city development. We also welcomed Dialogue Partners and other external partners to continue their active engagement with ASCN, in accordance with the Guidelines for ASCN Engagement with External Partners.

ASEAN Secretariat

26. We noted that the new ASEAN Secretariat Building, since its full operationalisation, has hosted an increasing number of ASEAN meetings. We looked forward to the optimisation of the use of ASEAN Secretariat facilities for hosting meetings, and in this regard we encouraged Chairs of ASEAN and ASEAN sectoral bodies from all three ASEAN Community Pillars to conduct more ASEAN meetings at the new building, including through the establishment of modalities to host meetings at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. We acknowledged the importance of strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat's institutional capacity and provision of policy support to the ASEAN Community-building process. We welcomed the launch of "The ASEAN" Magazine and "ASEAN Policy Brief" by the ASEAN Secretariat to share and communicate ASEAN's work and promote greater awareness of ASEAN.

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY

Implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025

27. We noted with satisfaction the encouraging progress made in the implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025, with 96% of the action lines having been acted upon. We encouraged the relevant sectoral bodies to continue to work expeditiously in addressing the remaining action lines. Meanwhile, we welcomed the preliminary report of the MTR of the APSC Blueprint 2025 as prepared by the ASEAN Secretariat. We supported efforts to reflect recent developments in ASEAN during the MTR, such as the adoption of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific as well as the developments in cybersecurity, and Women, Peace and Security. We were encouraged that the majority of the activities undertaken, thus far, had medium to high impact on ASEAN Community-building, and 80% of the activities were expected to be sustained in the future. We encouraged all sectoral bodies to work towards the refinement and finalisation of the MTR Report for submission to the 22nd APSC Council, the ACC, and subsequently to the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020.

Non-Traditional Security Threats

Terrorism and Violent Extremism

28. Recognising the importance of a collective and comprehensive approach to address terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism and radicalisation, we expressed continued support for the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2018-2025) and welcomed the adoption of the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action (PoA) to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (PCRVE) 2019-2025 (Bali Work Plan) at the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) in November 2019. We commended the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) for spearheading this initiative and looked forward to the active engagements of 19 other relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies/Organs/Entities, as well as Dialogue Partners and external parties, in the effective implementation of the Bali Work Plan.

Illicit Drugs

29. We commended and affirmed our full support for the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) in leading the cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination to combat illicit drug activities in the region. We underscored our serious concerns over global moves to reclassify certain types of illicit drugs to less restrictive schedules under the international drug conventions, and reaffirmed our commitment towards a drug-free region and a zero-tolerance approach towards illicit drugs. We also expressed concerns over the on-going deliberation on the recommendations by the World Health Organisation (WHO) regarding changes in the scope of control of substances, as we continue to work with international communities based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. We noted with appreciation the outcome

of the First Internal Review of the ASEAN Work Plan in Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 (ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2025), which highlighted an implementation rate of 79%. We commended the good work of the ASEAN Narcotics Cooperation Centre (ASEAN NARCO) in publishing the fourth series of the ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report (ADM) 2018 launched on the sidelines of the 40th ASOD and its Related Meetings on 27-30 August 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, and looked forward to the next series of the ADM Report. We also encouraged the preparation of the Mid-Term Review of the said Work Plan and looked forward to the 41st ASOD Meeting in Indonesia. We reiterated our call for all ASEAN Member States to intensify efforts in fighting the drug menace to secure the ASEAN Community against illicit trafficking of drugs and other drug-related crimes.

Trafficking in Persons

30. We commended the continued commitment of the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) in combating trafficking in persons in a more holistic manner through taking the lead in cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination. We noted progress in the implementation of the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan (2017-2020), which involved nine ASEAN sectoral bodies and looked forward to the review of the Work Plan.
31. We discussed on the issue of irregular movement of persons, including its connection with people smuggling and trafficking in persons in our region, which requires the parties concerned to identify and address the root causes and other contributory factors, whether at origin, during transit or destination as well as the involvement of relevant stakeholders based on the principle of shared responsibility as well as a balanced approach between law enforcement and humanitarian response to tackle the challenges.
32. We recalled the establishment of the Trust fund to Support Emergency Humanitarian and Relief Efforts in the Event of the Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia administered by the ASEAN Secretariat and called for voluntary contributions to the fund, as well as its effective utilisation, as set out in the Terms of Reference of the Trust Fund.
33. We also reiterated our commitment to strengthening cooperation among ASEAN Member States, Dialogue Partners and international community in combating trafficking in persons and people smuggling, including through law enforcement cooperation, sharing of information and expertise, exchange of intelligence and capacity building.
34. We expressed concern over the irregular movement of persons in the Southeast Asia region. We noted that criminal groups had taken advantage of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to exploit vulnerable groups. We acknowledged the close connection between irregular movement of persons, trafficking in persons, and smuggling of migrants. We reaffirmed the need for ASEAN Member States' coordinated responses in addressing the issues of trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and related transnational crime, including irregular movement of persons.

Border Management

35. We noted the ongoing work to enhance border management cooperation and that Thailand's draft Concept Paper on "ASEAN Border Management Cooperation Roadmap" was being discussed by the SOMTC and the Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting (DGICM). We noted the progress in operationalising the Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Member States Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of Other ASEAN Member States and encouraged its implementation based on its general principles. We expressed our gratitude to our fellow ASEAN Member States for extending evacuation assistance to nationals of ASEAN Member States stranded in each other's countries or in third countries at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also noted the ongoing efforts to develop the ASEAN Visa Portal and the feasibility of the ASEAN Business Travel Card under the DGICM.

Cybersecurity

36. We were pleased to note the progress in ASEAN cybersecurity cooperation and reaffirmed our commitment in building a safe, secure, and resilient cyberspace. Noting the transboundary and cross-cutting nature of cybersecurity, we welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Cybersecurity Coordinating Committee (ASEAN Cyber-CC), which aimed to promote cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation among ASEAN sectoral bodies on efforts to strengthen cybersecurity in the region, facilitate cross-sectoral discussions to promote policy coherence across the sectors and strengthen ASEAN's centrality in the region's cybersecurity architecture, and enhance alignment of regional cybersecurity policy while taking into account national operational considerations. We recognised the role of cybersecurity activities and training programmes of the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) in Singapore and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) in Bangkok in complementing existing ASEAN efforts in cybersecurity capacity building.

Peace and Security

37. We reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct in governing inter-state relations in the region and as a foundation for maintaining regional peace and stability. We were committed to further promoting the principles embodied in the TAC and emphasised the importance of all High Contracting Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Treaty. We welcomed the accession of Germany and Bahrain to the TAC and looked forward to the accession of Cuba and South Africa. We also welcomed the growing interest of non-regional countries to accede to the TAC, on the basis of respect for and in conformity with the purposes and principles of the TAC.
38. We were pleased to observe that all the existing initiatives under the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) had been duly assessed and found to remain relevant. We also noted that work was underway to finalise the ADMM Three-Year Work Programme 2020-2022 and the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group (EWGs) Work Plans 2020/21-2023 to chart the future direction of practical defence cooperation in ASEAN.

39. We acknowledged the defence sector's commitment and contribution to ASEAN's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic as reflected in the Joint Statement by the ASEAN Defence Ministers on Defence Cooperation Against Disease Outbreaks issued at the ADMM Retreat in February 2020. In this regard, we welcomed the successful conduct of the ADMM COVID-19 Table-Top Exercise on 27 May 2020 under the ASEAN Center of Military Medicine (ACMM), and the Virtual Workshop on Promoting Scientific Cooperation to Manage Infectious Disease Outbreaks on 30 June 2020 under the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defence Experts.
40. We noted the development of ASEAN cooperation on law and legal matters, undertaken by the ASEAN Law Ministers' Meeting (ALAWMM) and the ASEAN Senior Law Officials' Meeting (ASLOM) in supporting the ASEAN Community-building agenda and strengthening a rules-based ASEAN. We also looked forward to the progress on the initiative to develop an ASEAN Extradition Treaty.
41. We welcomed the inclusion of the ASEAN Ministers/Attorneys-General Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (AMAG-MLAT) as an ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Body in Annex 1 of the ASEAN Charter, and welcomed its important contribution to ASEAN, especially in strengthening ASEAN institutional structure in the area of criminal justice and combating transnational crimes. We looked forward to the first Senior Officials' Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (SOM-MLAT), scheduled to be held in Brunei Darussalam, to discuss mutual legal assistance related matters, as well as to endeavour toward the effective implementation of the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAT).
42. We looked forward to the implementation of the Practical Arrangements (PA) between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Cooperation in the Areas of Nuclear Science and Technology and Applications, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards, which was signed in September 2019. We also looked forward to the convening of the 7th Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) tentatively in November 2020 to enhance cooperation among the nuclear regulatory bodies and further strengthen nuclear safety, security, and safeguards in the region.
43. We reiterated our commitment to preserve the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter. We stressed the importance of the full and effective implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty, including through implementing the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ (2018-2022). 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. Our ASEAN experts could explore ways to bridge the differences, including the possibility of engaging

with the NWS experts. We would continue to submit the biennial SEANWFZ Resolution through the First Committee to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

44. We congratulated the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) for the completion of the research project titled “Lessons Learned from a Process of Conflict Resolution between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) as Mediated by Indonesia (1993-1996)”. We commended the ASEAN-IPR’s continued efforts in implementing the ASEAN Leaders’ Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN, advancing the role of women in peace and reconciliation and forging partnerships with relevant ASEAN Bodies to further promote the culture of peace and moderation in ASEAN. Notably, the convening of an “ASEAN Women Interfaith Dialogue: Promoting Understanding and Inclusivity” on 12-13 November 2019, whereby Members of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) were amongst the participants and resource persons, is yet another sign of our commitment to encourage and empower women practitioners and experts in the field of peace and security.
45. We had fruitful discussions and exchange of views among ASEAN Foreign Ministers, our external partners and the United Nations on “Strengthening Women’s Role for Sustainable Peace and Security”. Our discussions contributed to ASEAN’s concerted efforts to promote implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security during the 20th anniversary of its adoption this year. We also underlined the need to enhance the role of women of ASEAN in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and development. We further welcomed ASEAN’s efforts and Member States’ initiatives on women empowerment and their roles in peace and security through, among others, the active work of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the ASEAN Women’s Entrepreneur Network (AWEN), and ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR). We appreciated the ASEAN Leaders’ Special Session at the 36th ASEAN Summit on Women’s Empowerment in the Digital Age. We welcomed the convening of the Web Seminar on the Role of Women Negotiators and Mediators in the Maintenance of Regional Peace and Security by Indonesia on 1-2 July 2020.
46. We encouraged the ASEAN-IPR’s contribution to further strengthening peace-oriented values towards harmony, peace, security, and stability in the region through its capacity building activities and research on best practices and ASEAN experiences in peace and conflict management, post-conflict peace-building, and gender-mainstreaming in these areas, in collaboration and coordination with the relevant ASEAN bodies and entities.
47. We reiterated the importance of mine action in national rehabilitation and sustainable development and welcomed efforts to promote mine action at the global level, including at the United Nations. We commended the role of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) as a centre of excellence in promoting ASEAN’s efforts to address the issue of explosive remnants of war (ERW) for interested ASEAN Member States and raise awareness of the

danger of ERW among affected communities. We expressed appreciation to ASEAN's Partners in contributing to the undertaking of projects and operationalisation of the ARMAC.

Maritime Cooperation

48. We took note of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/19 emphasising, in the Preamble, the universal and unified character of the 1982 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. We welcomed positive developments in maritime cooperation among ASEAN Member States, including through continued constructive dialogues on issues of common interest and concern under the ambit of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ADMM and ADMM-Plus, AMMTC, East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). We encouraged ASEAN Member States to intensify cooperation in promoting maritime security, safety and freedom of navigation and overflight, addressing transnational crime at sea, creating conducive environment for peaceful settlement of disputes, ensuring marine sustainability, providing humanitarian assistance to persons and vessels in distress at sea, combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, promoting maritime connectivity and commerce, strengthening marine scientific research, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
49. We noted with satisfaction the successful convening of the 9th AMF and 7th EAMF in Da Nang in December 2019, and reaffirmed the role of the AMF and EAMF in promoting maritime cooperation in the region through dialogue and consultations. Taking into account the cross-cutting nature of maritime cooperation, we underlined the necessity for closer coordination across all three ASEAN Community Pillars to avoid duplication of efforts. We looked forward to the convening of the 10th AMF and 8th EAMF in December 2020 in Viet Nam.

Human Rights

50. We congratulated the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on the progress and achievements in the implementation of its Five-Year Work Plan 2016-2020 and took note of the AICHR Annual Report 2020. Notably, we appreciated the AICHR's consistent efforts to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation and mainstream human rights across the ASEAN Community, such as in the areas of right to education, rights of persons with disabilities, environmental impact assessment, rights of the child, freedom of opinion and expression, and youth debate on human rights. We noted with satisfaction AICHR's continued constructive engagement with dialogue and external partners and relevant stakeholders, including international and regional human rights mechanisms, civil society organisations (CSOs), and the private sector. We also commended the

AICHR's efforts to remain cohesive and responsive in addressing emerging challenges, including amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and took note of the Press Release on COVID-19 by the AICHR calling for attention to human rights implications in public health emergencies. We tasked our Senior Officials to continue working on the implementation of the decision made by the 52nd AMM on the AICHR and looked forward to the establishment of the Panel of Experts.

51. We welcomed and approved the Five-Year Work Plan of the AICHR 2021-2025 and the Priority Programmes/Activities of the AICHR 2021. Moving forward, we encouraged the AICHR to continue its efforts to fully and effectively discharge its mandates and functions, particularly in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN, and to reinforce its cooperation with external partners and regional entities while retaining its public outreach as a priority to engage all members of society in contributing to the building of a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community.

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Economic Integration

Viet Nam's Priority Economic Deliverables

52. We welcomed the progress made in the implementation of Viet Nam's 13 priority economic deliverables (PEDs), which – under the theme “Cohesive and Responsive” – are being pursued under three main priorities, namely: (i) promoting intra-ASEAN economic integration and connectivity, (ii) deepening ASEAN engagement with the global community for peace and sustainable development, and (iii) enhancing the responsiveness and institutional capacity of ASEAN. We expressed optimism that, notwithstanding the unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID-19, ASEAN Member States, under the leadership of Viet Nam, would exert utmost efforts to successfully deliver these PEDs as targeted.

A Global ASEAN: Multilateral Trading System, Progress in Plus 1 FTAs, RCEP

53. We also welcomed the reaffirmation by the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministers on their commitment to the goal of signing the RCEP Agreement later this year, as mandated by our Leaders. We agreed that the signing of this modern, comprehensive, high-quality, and mutually beneficial Agreement would yet be the region's strongest response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. We were also encouraged by early efforts being undertaken not only in enhancing and upgrading the ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including those with China, Republic of Korea and with Australia and New Zealand, but also in engaging potential FTA partners. We believed in the important role of the ASEAN's FTAs in contributing to a stronger rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at its centre and a more resilient ASEAN Economic Community, consistent with our Leaders commitment to maintain

an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based regional architecture in the region. We also acknowledged the need to reform the WTO system in a way that takes into consideration the changing global realities.

Smart, Inclusive and Sustainable Development

4IR and Digital Connectivity, with Emphasis on Cross-Cutting Nature

54. We recognised the increasing pace of digital transformation in our societies and economies, especially the accelerated adoption of digital technologies in coping with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitating economic recovery. In this context, we emphasised ASEAN's commitment to advancing the work in embracing new technologies and addressing the manifold digital gaps, in skills, infrastructure, and regulations, within and across ASEAN Member States, as well as the risks and challenges that digitalisation entails. To this end, we reiterated the strategic importance of the ongoing development of the Consolidated Strategy on the 4IR for ASEAN.
55. On the digital economy, we were encouraged by the ongoing review of the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020 and the timely development of the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025. We noted the progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework Action Plan (DIFAP) by relevant sectoral bodies to establish a strong foundation of the ASEAN digital economy. We appreciated the completion of the ASEAN Digital Integration Index (ADII), which would enable digitalisation to be an effective pillar of economic growth by helping regional policymakers develop a harmonised approach to assess and advance ASEAN's digital integration. In this regard, we welcomed the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic Commerce's commitment to complete the ratification process by November 2020 and to report updates on the entry-into-force of the Agreement on Electronic Commerce to the 37th ASEAN Summit.

Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development – Energy, Agriculture and Fisheries, Wildlife Trafficking

56. We recognised that one key realisation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic is the interconnectedness of our long-term economic development with sustainability considerations across all fronts. We welcomed efforts underway to create favourable conditions to achieve ASEAN's goals in ensuring energy security, accessibility, affordability and sustainability for all. We noted the good progress made in the development of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (APAEC) Phase II 2021-2025, which is on track for adoption at the 38th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting in November 2020. We acknowledged the need to support the energy sector in deepening efforts and collaboration to address gaps and challenges to achieve its aspirational targets for renewable energy and energy intensity reduction. We also looked forward to advancing regional power integration and multilateral power trade in ASEAN including integration of renewable energy into the ASEAN Power Grid.
57. We were pleased with the continued efforts to establish the ASEAN Network for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing (AN-IUU) as

a cooperation framework for information sharing in support of sustainable fisheries. We welcomed the finalisation of the Cooperation Framework, Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of an AN-IUU and looked forward to the subsequent endorsement by the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry in October 2020 which will enhance ASEAN Member States' capacity and capabilities on the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in the fight against IUU fishing. We welcomed the development of a Roadmap on Combating IUU Fishing in the ASEAN region for the period of 2020-2025 as one of Viet Nam's priority economic deliverables of 2020, which would identify priority issues, action programme and implementation arrangements for ASEAN Member States to combat IUU fishing.

58. As wildlife trafficking has become a growing problem internationally, we welcomed ongoing efforts to implement the ASEAN Guidelines for Detecting and Preventing Wildlife Trafficking to help law enforcement agencies combat the illegal trade in wildlife and related transnational crime. We noted the discussions on combatting wildlife trafficking in the development of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. We reiterated our commitment to maintain a coordinated approach across pillars and among relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies to information sharing and investigation, which supports a shared vision of preventing and detecting wildlife trafficking.
59. We noted that sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices, including sustainable production of vegetable oils, particularly palm oil, is essential to the attainment of the SDGs by 2030. We reaffirmed our support for the concerned Member States' efforts to continue engaging relevant parties to establish a framework to address issues pertaining to sustainable production of palm oil and environmental protection in a holistic, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner.

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

Peoples and Institutions

Culture

60. We welcomed the designation of 2020 as the Year of ASEAN Identity. We commended the ongoing efforts led by Indonesia as the current Chair of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and the Arts (AMCA) on the development of the Narrative of ASEAN Identity. We welcomed the ASEAN Virtual Consultation with the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on the Narrative of ASEAN Identity, as well as the ASEAN Virtual Cross Pillar Consultation on the Narrative of ASEAN Identity, and looked forward to the adoption of the Narrative of ASEAN Identity during the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020. We further commended the efforts to bring arts and culture closer to the people through the launch of the ASEAN Cultural Heritage Digital Archive (ACHDA), which offered a rich depository of cultural artefacts that can be viewed three-dimensionally.

Gender Mainstreaming

61. We were encouraged by the ASEAN Leaders' Special Session on Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age at the 36th ASEAN Summit. We reaffirmed our commitment to advocate gender equality and ensure meaningful participation of women and girls in the region's social and economic development. We reiterated our support to promote women's political leadership and commended the ASEAN Committee on Women and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in advancing the women, peace, and security agenda, strengthening gender data and statistics and promoting equality for all women and girls, and looked forward to the first regional study on Women, Peace and Security, the ASEAN Gender Outlook and the finalisation of the regional strategic framework on gender mainstreaming across the three Community Pillars.

Social Welfare and Development

62. We reaffirmed the need for social protection to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable groups and took note of the recommendations from the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) Special Online Meeting held in June 2020. We also recognised with appreciation the contributions of social work and social workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and in ensuring overall health, safety and well-being of the peoples of ASEAN. We welcomed Viet Nam's initiative to develop an ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Work towards a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community and looked forward to its adoption at the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020.

Human Resources Development

63. We commended and welcomed multi-sectoral efforts aimed at strengthening ASEAN's human resources, with a view to developing a regional workforce that is future-ready, competitive and resilient. These include the adoption of the terms of reference of the ASEAN TVET Council by the ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting, ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, and the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting, which will bolster ASEAN's work to enhance the region's TVET sector. In light of the opportunities and challenges associated with rapid technological advancements, demographic shifts and greening economies, we looked forward to the joint efforts of the labour and education sectors to develop the Roadmap to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work that was adopted by the 36th ASEAN Summit. We also welcomed the coordinated development of the sectoral work plans for 2021-2025, and looked forward to their finalisation and approval next year. We highlighted that the task of boosting ASEAN's human resources requires a strong and harmonised approach involving all relevant sectoral bodies. We looked forward to the completion of the Study on Human Resources Development Preparedness in ASEAN which will provide support to ASEAN Member States in considering necessary approaches and innovations.

Youth Development

64. We welcomed the aspirations expressed by youth representatives at the ASEAN Leaders' Interface with Representatives of ASEAN Youth, held on the sidelines of the 36th ASEAN Summit, and in line with the broader framework of Human Resources Development, noted the need to invest in and strengthen future-ready education systems, within the framework of life-long learning. We emphasised the importance of the three focus areas identified, namely: youth volunteerism, youth entrepreneurship, and Fourth Industrial Revolution skills for youth. To this end, we looked forward to the implementation of ASEAN Volunteers project once the COVID-19 situation has stabilised. We expressed support for the continued promotion of youth development in the region particularly around the five domains of the ASEAN Youth Development Index: Education, Health and Wellbeing, Employment and Opportunity, Participation and Engagement and ASEAN Awareness, Values and Identity. We also encouraged more ASEAN youth interaction with external partners through concrete activities under existing ASEAN-led mechanisms.

Health Development and Relevant Cross-Sectoral Initiatives

65. We appreciated the ASEAN Health Sector's efforts in launching a timely and cohesive regional health response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the mobilisation of coordination platforms, such as the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre Network; the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre; the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre; and the ASEAN Plus Three Field Epidemiology Training Network. We also acknowledged the efforts by ASEAN Health Ministers in strengthening public health emergency preparedness and regional health security in responding to all hazards and emerging threats, including mitigation of biological threats as well as in enhancing cooperation with external partners in this area.
66. We recognised the progress made in the implementation of the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN Leaders Declaration on Disaster Health Management (2019-2025) including the capacity building of emergency medical teams; and the signing of the Agreement for the Establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) to facilitate inter-pillar and inter-sectoral partnerships in promoting healthy and active ageing. We further looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through One Health Approach (2019-2030) which will contribute to health security and sustainable development of other sectors involved in animal health, agriculture, environment, and food safety and security.

Information

67. We appreciated the ongoing efforts by the information sector to address the spread of fake news and misinformation in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. We noted the adoption of the Joint Statement of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) to Minimise the Negative Effects of the COVID-19 on 25 August 2020. Following the adoption of the ASEAN Communication Master Plan 2018-2025 (ACMP II), we took note of the ongoing initiatives to promote ASEAN as a Community of Opportunities for All, including the launch of the Poll on ASEAN Awareness (PoAA).

Labour and Migrant Workers

68. We commended ASEAN Member States for the completion of the self-assessment of their respective implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, and translations of the ASEAN Consensus into some national languages. The results will serve as basis in identifying regional initiatives to implement the ASEAN Consensus in the next five years. Moreover, we looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers which will be a useful reference for ASEAN Member States in improving the quality and access to their return and reintegration programmes. We looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025 by the ASEAN Labour Ministers as a framework of cross-sectoral cooperation on prohibition, prevention, and elimination of child labour practices as well as protection of children.
69. We noted the completion of four regional studies on the Extension of Social Security to Workers in Informal Employment in the ASEAN Region; Old-Age Income Security in ASEAN Member States; Informal Employment Statistics to Support Decent Work Promotion in ASEAN; and Managing Technology's Implications on Work, Workers, and Employment Relationships in ASEAN, which provided recommendations contributing to a comprehensive approach towards effective social security policies for informal workers and retirees and will be considered as input to the development of post-2020 sectoral work plans. We also supported the ongoing pilot application of the ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems and looked forward to the final results later this year.

Civil Service

70. We recognised the pivotal role of the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM) in the continuous promotion of transparent, and accountable civil service systems and good governance at all levels. We looked forward to the finalisation of the ACCSM Work Plan 2021-2025, which sets out the goal to build and sustain a high performing, dynamic and citizen-centric civil service for the peoples of ASEAN through enhancing workforce competencies and standards in the public sectors; building institutional capacities and inter-agency cooperation; transformative leadership; strengthening ASEAN Resource Centres; and public sector reform and modernisation.
71. In this era of disruptive technology, enhancement of civil service capacities to be agile, efficient, and people-centred is envisioned in the ASEAN Statement on Promotion of Good Governance and Acceleration of an Agile Civil Service in a Digital Economy. We looked forward to the endorsement of the ASEAN Guidelines on Public Service Delivery. The Guidelines is expected to guide the ASEAN Member States in providing high standard and people-oriented public service through five principles that could drive progress in the region's public service delivery, notably: accessibility to information, participation, responsiveness, accountability, and non-discrimination and inclusiveness.

Environment and Transboundary Haze Pollution

72. We highlighted the importance of advancing cooperation and strengthening partnerships on environmental protection and conservation with greater efforts to address cross-cutting issues for sustainable development, among others in the areas of marine debris pollution, climate change, clean energy transition, sustainable water management, biodiversity conservation, and transboundary haze pollution.

Climate Action

73. We reaffirmed our commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, and looked forward to the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the UNFCCC in 2021 in Glasgow, the United Kingdom, as well as the Climate Adaptation Summit that will be held online on 25 January 2021. We noted the ongoing development of the ASEAN State of Climate Change Report and the ASEAN Climate Finance Strategy to support the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

Marine Debris

74. We reiterated our commitment to the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Region and to operationalise the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris, among others through the development of an ASEAN Action Plan on Marine Debris. We noted the ongoing initiatives to reduce marine plastic debris pollution and to support ASEAN in the transition to circular economy.

Biodiversity

75. We reiterated ASEAN's commitment to promoting biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and mainstreaming towards the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in order to minimise the devastating consequences of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. We noted the successful conduct of the 6th ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference held on 21-24 October 2019 in Pakse, Lao PDR, organised by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), and looked forward to increasing designation of protected areas in ASEAN Member States as ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs). We noted that the ACB held a webinar on biodiversity and health in May 2020 to exchange knowledge, ideas, and experiences on the inter-linkages of biodiversity and human health.

Transboundary Haze Pollution

76. 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 the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (the Roadmap) to achieve a Haze-Free ASEAN by 2020. We were pleased to note the progress of implementation of the Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation

towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (Roadmap) 2016-2020, ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) 2006-2020, and the ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems (APSMPE) 2014-2020. We expressed our appreciation for the valuable support extended by the Partners in the ongoing implementation of (i) Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN (SUPA) supported by the EU; (ii) Measurable Action for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA) supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and (iii) GEF-6 Project on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). We stressed the importance of remaining vigilant and noted the ongoing preventive efforts to minimise any possible occurrence of transboundary smoke haze during periods of drier weather. We looked forward to the final reviews of the APMS and the Roadmap to evaluate the achievement of a haze-free ASEAN.

Disaster Management and Emergency Response

77. We commended the work of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) in enhancing ASEAN's capabilities and coordination in disaster management and emergency response. We reaffirmed our commitment in preventing and mitigating the impact of slow onset disasters such as drought in the region and looked forward to the formulation of the ASEAN Declaration on Building Resilience to Drought and its subsequent regional action plan. We noted the development of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025 that will set out priorities and activities toward the realisation of the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, and move the implementation of AADMER forward to a people-centered, people-oriented, sustainable, and networked approach by 2025 and noted the ongoing discussion to establish a suitable platform for members of the public to contribute towards ASEAN's disaster response efforts, which could include the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund. We also noted the successful organisation of the ASEAN High-Level Symposium on Disaster Management on 26 February 2020 at the ASEAN Secretariat as an important platform for ASEAN in promoting seamless collaboration among ASEAN Community Pillars and strengthening its cross-sectoral coordination in reducing disaster risks and responding to disasters. We reaffirmed the importance of strengthening coordination among ASEAN Member States in disaster management and supporting the operation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), including the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) Regional Warehouse and Satellite Warehouses.
78. We reaffirmed our support for a more visible and enhanced role of ASEAN to support Myanmar in providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process, and promoting sustainable development in Rakhine State. We appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General of ASEAN in leading the implementation of the recommendations of the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) and encouraged the Secretary-General of ASEAN to

continue identifying possible areas for ASEAN to effectively facilitate the repatriation process. We welcomed the operationalisation of the Ad-Hoc Support Team of the ASEAN Secretariat to further facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the PNA and looked forward to the conduct of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). We also welcomed the endorsement of the finalised projects at the 3rd High-Level Coordination Meeting, held on 27 July 2020 via video conference. We appreciated the contribution from ASEAN Member States and some external partners in supporting ASEAN activities, including the prioritised projects in Rakhine State to facilitate the repatriation process and to promote inclusive and sustainable development, including through providing basic services and creating livelihood opportunities for the displaced persons.

79. We stressed the importance of and reiterated our continued support for Myanmar's commitment to ensure safety and security for all communities in Rakhine State as effectively as possible and facilitate the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure, and dignified manner. We looked forward and stood ready to support and facilitate the full implementation of the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State between the Government of Myanmar and the Government of Bangladesh signed in 2017 and the renewed MoU between the Government of Myanmar, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) until June 2021. In this regard, we stand ready to facilitate further substantive dialogue between Myanmar and Bangladesh on this matter. We encouraged Myanmar to continue to implement the remaining recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. We noted that the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) submitted its Final Report to the Government of Myanmar in January 2020 and reiterated the need to find a comprehensive and durable solution to address the root causes of the conflict and to create a conducive environment so that the affected communities can rebuild their lives. We welcomed the Government of Myanmar's efforts in the implementation of the National Strategy on Closure of IDP Camps. We also reaffirmed ASEAN's continued support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities, as well as ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.

ASEAN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

80. We underscored the importance of strengthening ASEAN Centrality and unity in our engagement with ASEAN's external partners through ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN-Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), EAS, ARF, and ADMM-Plus, in order to build mutual trust and confidence as well as reinforce an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre.
81. We noted with satisfaction the encouraging progress in ASEAN's relations with our Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, and Development Partners through the existing frameworks, plans of action, and development cooperation programmes based on mutual interest and benefit. We acknowledged with appreciation the contribution of these partnerships to our

ASEAN Community-building and development cooperation efforts. We also welcomed the support of our partners for the priorities of ASEAN in 2020 in advancing a “Cohesive and Responsive” ASEAN. We agreed to further strengthen partnership and cooperation with our external partners, thus contributing to the continued efforts towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and our proactive response to emerging challenges.

82. We took note of the growing interest from countries and regional organisations outside of the region in developing stronger collaboration and cooperation with ASEAN, including through applications for formal partnerships with ASEAN. We agreed on the need to reach out to new potential partners based on shared interest, constructive engagement, and mutual benefit. In this regard, we expressed appreciation for Brunei Darussalam’s initiative and welcomed the Special SOM on ASEAN’s External Relations, which discussed a comprehensive approach for ASEAN in the conduct of its external relations. We noted the role and contribution of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN in actively engaging with ASEAN’s partners, including through 93 Non-ASEAN Ambassadors Accredited to ASEAN (NAAAs). We also welcomed the role of the 54 ASEAN Committees in Third Countries and International Organisations in promoting ASEAN’s interest and forging partnerships in the respective host countries and international organisations.

Dialogue Partners

83. We welcomed the convening of the 22nd ASEAN-China Summit, the 22nd ASEAN-Japan Summit, the 16th ASEAN-India Summit, and the 7th ASEAN-U.S. Summit. We also welcomed the convening of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) Commemorative Summit on the 30th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations in November 2019 in Busan, ROK. We looked forward to the convening of the ASEAN-New Zealand Leaders’ Summit to Commemorate the 45th Anniversary of Dialogue Relations at a time and venue agreeable to all. We also looked forward to the convening of the ASEAN-U.S. Special Summit at a time of mutual convenience, with a view to further strengthening the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership. We were pleased to announce our endorsement of proposal for the annual ASEAN-Australia Summit and looked forward to our Leaders’ final endorsement of this proposal at the ASEAN-Australia Leaders’ Summit in 2020. We also looked forward to the 23rd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting to be convened in end-2020.
84. We looked forward to the adoption of the successor Plans of Action to guide ASEAN’s cooperation with Canada, China, India, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, and the U.S. for the next five years (2021-2025).

ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partners and ASEAN Development Partners

85. We noted the good progress made in the ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, ASEAN-Turkey Sectoral Dialogue Partnership as well as the ASEAN-Germany Development Partnership and ASEAN-Chile Development Partnership. We welcomed France and Italy becoming Development Partners

of ASEAN. We appreciated the ongoing support of these partnerships for ASEAN's Community-building efforts. We welcomed the Chair's initiative to hold open-ended virtual meetings with ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Partners and Development Partners to explore opportunities for further cooperation and exchanges on issues of mutual interest.

Regional and International Organisations

86. We reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism and underscored the importance of ASEAN's partnerships with other external partners such as regional and international organisations, including the United Nations, to address global concerns, pursue shared goals and complementary initiatives, and promote sustainable development for the benefit of our people. In this connection, we welcomed the convening of the 10th ASEAN-U.N. Summit in November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. We also welcomed the presence of two ASEAN Member States, Indonesia and Viet Nam, as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. We appreciated the briefing by the Secretary-General of ASEAN at the Security Council on "Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations in Maintaining Peace and Security: The Role of ASEAN". We are committed to further ASEAN's active contribution to UN-led efforts on maintaining international peace and security.
87. We were pleased to note the positive progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016-2020) and looked forward to further strengthening the ASEAN-UN comprehensive partnership and cooperation, including through the adoption of the new ASEAN-UN Plan of Action (2021-2025). We reaffirmed our commitment to intensify cooperation in the implementation of the Complementarities Roadmap and effectively realizing the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
88. We looked forward to the convening of the Meeting between the ASEAN Foreign Ministers with the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

ASEAN Plus Three

89. We reaffirmed the importance of the APT cooperation framework in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the East Asian region. We underscored the need to further strengthen and deepen functional cooperation under the APT framework, which plays a key role in regional community building in East Asia, with ASEAN as the driving force. We agreed to further enhance APT cooperation in wide-ranging areas through the implementation of the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022. We also looked forward to the continued implementation of the East Asia Vision Group II recommendations. We reiterated the importance of "connecting the connectivities" within the APT. We further welcomed the strengthening of APT cooperation in response to emerging challenges, with the successful convening of the Special APT Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April 2020 and the adoption of a Joint Statement

that demonstrated the strong political commitment of the APT countries to effectively control and contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and address its adverse socio-economic impacts. In this sense, we are committed to promote APT cooperation in strengthening regional economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges and welcomed the proposed issuance of a Leaders' Statement at the 23rd APT Summit to this aim.

East Asia Summit

90. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening the East Asia Summit (EAS) as a Leaders-led forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability, and economic prosperity in the region. We welcomed the 15th Anniversary of the EAS in 2020 and looked forward to the adoption of the Ha Noi Declaration on the 15th Anniversary of the East Asia Summit to further strengthen the EAS process, sustain its strategic value and relevance as well as enhance its responsiveness to fast-changing developments in the regional and global context. We agreed to further enhance EAS practical cooperation under the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative (2018-2022). We also highlighted the need to strengthen the EAS collaboration in response to emerging issues and challenges that affect peace, stability and prosperity in the region based on the principle of strengthening ASEAN Centrality. We encouraged the enhanced coordinating role of the EAS Chair in promoting synergy between the EAS and other ASEAN-led mechanisms as well as in ensuring effective coordination and exchange of information among the EAS participating countries inter-sessionally. We welcomed the continued discussions and efforts to strengthen the EAS, including through, among others, the regular engagement of the EAS Ambassadors' Meeting in Jakarta to discuss implementation of the Leaders' decisions and initiatives, as well as exchange information on regional development cooperation initiatives and security policies and initiatives.

ASEAN Regional Forum

91. We reiterated the importance of the ARF as a key platform for dialogue and consultation on regional political and security issues of common interest and concern. We noted with satisfaction the progress of cooperation in the ARF, and commended the provisional measures undertaken to ensure continuity of cooperation and operations of the ARF amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were pleased to note that the ARF continued to further enhance its effectiveness and maintain its relevance in the evolving regional security architecture. In this regard, and with a view to affirming ASEAN's central role in advancing the ARF process, we noted that the newly developed Ha Noi Plan of Action II for the period of 2020-2025 would be tabled for adoption at the upcoming 27th ARF and we approved the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practice and Protocol, which would be shared with the ARF Participants for notation.

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

92. We reaffirmed the objectives and principles of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which provides a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. We noted that ASEAN-led mechanisms could serve as useful platforms for dialogue and cooperation to implement the Outlook. We further noted that various ASEAN sectoral bodies, including those from the ASEAN Political-Security Community pillar and the ASEAN Economic Community pillar, had discussed the implementation of the Outlook. In this regard, we encouraged external partners to support and undertake cooperation with ASEAN, in accordance with the principles contained in the Outlook, on the four identified key areas, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN SDGs 2030, economic and other possible areas of cooperation, through practical projects to promote mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit through ASEAN-led mechanisms, thereby contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Timor-Leste's Application for ASEAN Membership

93. We noted the progress made in preparing for the ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillars Fact-Finding Missions (FFM) to Timor-Leste. We looked forward to the convening of the FFMs, when circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic allow, and to the outcomes of the FFMs, after which a comprehensive assessment of Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership would be developed. In this regard, we welcomed the effort of the AEC and ASCC in moving this forward by planning to hold virtual interfaces with Timor-Leste's sectoral counterparts to prepare for their FFMs. We reaffirmed our commitment to continue exploring ways to provide capacity building assistance to Timor-Leste, especially through participation in non-policy making activities in ASEAN.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

South China Sea

94. 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 recognised the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, and prosperity. 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 warmly welcomed the continuously improving cooperation between ASEAN and China, and were encouraged by the progress of the substantive negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, within a mutually-agreed timeline. We appreciated efforts undertaken to continue the second reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text in spite of the evolving pandemic situation. We emphasised the need to maintain and 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 we reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

95. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers on the land reclamations, activities, and serious incidents in the area, 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 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.

Developments in the Korean Peninsula

96. We stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. We urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the US and DPRK leaders. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We reiterated our readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties.

Situation in the Middle East

97. We noted the developments in the Middle East region. We reiterated the need for a comprehensive, just, and sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East region. We urged both sides to actively take positive steps to allow for negotiations to gain traction and work together towards the resumption of negotiations to achieve an enduring peace. We fully support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine with the realisation of two states, Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The UN Secretary-General's Appeal for a Global Ceasefire amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

98. We noted the UN Secretary-General appeal for Global Ceasefire and welcomed an initiative by an ASEAN Member State on the launching of the “Statement of Support to the UN Secretary-General’s Appeal for a Global Ceasefire amid the COVID-19 Pandemic”, which garnered the commitment of 171 UN Member States, Non-Member Observer State and Observer to pull back from hostilities and to pursue a peaceful settlement of conflicts, especially during the pandemic. The Statement also aims to mobilise collective support for the appeal by the UN Secretary-General while underscoring the importance of multilateralism, the rule of law, diplomacy, and the crucial role of women and youth in efforts to build sustainable peace. We are hopeful that all ASEAN Member States, Dialogue Partners and international community could lend their support for the Statement.

54th ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS’ MEETING

99. We looked forward to the convening of the 54th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, Post Ministerial Conferences, 22nd APT Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, 11th EAS Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, and 28th ARF to be held in Brunei Darussalam in 2021.
