



## **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE FIRST ASEAN-AUSTRALIA BIENNIAL SUMMIT**

**7 September 2016, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

### ***Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community***

The First ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit was held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Summit was chaired by H.E. Thongloun SISOULITH, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR. The Summit was attended by all Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member States and The Honourable Malcolm Turnbull MP, Prime Minister of Australia. The Secretary-General of ASEAN was also in attendance.

2. The ASEAN Leaders welcomed Australia's support for the establishment of the ASEAN Community, which is a culmination of an almost five-decade long effort of regional integration that is aimed at building a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible, and a truly people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community. The ASEAN Leaders encouraged Australia to further contribute towards the realisation of the vision and goals outlined in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. We emphasized the importance of the rule of law in international relations.

3. We were pleased to note the steady progress achieved in the dialogue relations between ASEAN and Australia over the past forty-two years and looked forward to enhancing the ASEAN-Australia strategic partnership encompassing the areas of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation.

4. We were satisfied with the substantive progress and achievements made in the implementation of the ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action (2015-2019) to implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership, which was adopted by Leaders at the ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit in Nay Pyi Taw, November 2014.

5. The ASEAN Leaders also appreciated Australia's continued support for ASEAN's unity and centrality in the evolving regional architecture through ASEAN-led mechanisms, in particular, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

6. We expressed our appreciation for Australia's support and contribution in strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation in the region, including through regional

fora such as the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting-Plus and the ASEAN Regional Forum, including its co-chairing of the ADDM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Counter-Terrorism with Singapore. We welcomed Australia's Initiative to invite ASEAN countries to participate in an Australian correctional services course on the management of terrorist prisoners.

7. We condemned the violence and brutality committed by terrorist and radical groups in Iraq and Syria, and any other parts of the world, whose impact increasingly poses a threat to all regions of the world. We adopted the renewed ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, reflecting our collective resolve to strengthen cooperation and to continue to work collaboratively to combat the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism in the region.

8. We reaffirmed our commitment to prevent and combat terrorism and transnational crimes, particularly trafficking in persons, people smuggling sea piracy, illicit drug trafficking, and cybercrime. In this connection, we appreciated Australia's support to combat trafficking in persons through the Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP) and noted its new "International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery" launched in March 2016. We recognized Australia's partnership as Co-Chair of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime and its initiatives, including the Regional Support Office. We also appreciated Australia's support for the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), and welcomed the commencement of the Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in ASEAN (TRIANGLE II) in 2015.

9. We also expressed appreciation for Australia's continuous support in enhancing cooperation in the field of immigration under the Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Division of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM)+Australia Consultation.

10. The ASEAN Leaders welcomed the extension of the ASEAN Australia Development Cooperation Program (AADCP) II from 2015 to 2019, supporting the institutional strengthening of the ASEAN Secretariat and regional mechanisms and capacities to implement the AEC Blueprint. We also noted Australia's substantial support for the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Grow Asia Initiative developed in partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat.

11. We recognised Australia's valuable support in strengthening regional integration, through among others, ASEAN Connectivity and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). We appreciated Australia's contribution to the formulation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the IAI Work Plan III, which were adopted by ASEAN Leaders at the 28<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 6 September

2016. In this regard, we looked forward to Australia's continued support.

12. We noted the Mekong Business initiative (MBI), which works with Mekong countries to expand the private sector by improving the regulatory environment for small to medium enterprises. We also noted that Australia's Mekong Water Resources Program contributed to help manage the region's water resource for greater economic opportunities. ASEAN Leaders welcomed Australia's announcement that it is co-funding the Women's Livelihood Bond project, which aims to mobilise private capital by providing loans for social enterprises and micro finance institutions to empower women to achieve sustainable livelihoods in Cambodia, Philippines and Vietnam. ASEAN Leaders further welcomed Australia's support for women's economic engagement in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), including through its proposal to work with the Philippines to support a major ASEAN women's business forum in the Philippines in 2017, as a commemorative event for ASEAN's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

13. We noted the strength of Australia and ASEAN's trade and investment relationship, the benefits of deeper regional integration and the shared task of promoting continued prosperity in the region. We noted the role of the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) in deepening Australia's economic engagement with ASEAN, and welcomed the entry into force and the implementation of the First Protocol to Amend the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) as well as Australia's continued support for the implementation of AANZFTA, including through the extension of the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Program to 2018. We noted that the General Review of the AANZFTA Agreement will take place in 2017, and looked forward to the recommendations derived from the General Review by 2018. We agreed on the importance of the General Review in ensuring that the AANZFTA remains a high quality agreement.

14. We noted the increased efforts by participating countries in furthering the progress in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. Given its potential impacts on advancing global trade and growth, we agreed to redouble efforts to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial agreement.

15. We noted with satisfaction the progress on the development and standardization of ASEAN agricultural practices in order to increase product marketability and access and enhance international competitiveness. We underscored the importance of establishing an ASEAN wide mutual recognition mechanism to strengthen the implementation and acceptability of these regional agricultural practices, including the conduct of Study on Mutual Recognition Models for the ASEAN Agricultural Best Practices.

16. We recognised the great importance of youth development in ASEAN and welcomed Australia's New Colombo Plan initiative to promote people-to-people exchanges by supporting Australian students to study and undertake work-based

placements in ASEAN Member States. We also welcomed the launch in 2015 of the Australia-ASEAN Council, which, among others, actively engaged with the ASEAN Committee in Canberra to improve community understanding of each other's economies and societies. In this respect, ASEAN Leaders also welcomed the Council's ASEAN Emerging Leaders Program, which will build a cohort of young Southeast Asian leaders with links to Australia. ASEAN Leaders also welcomed Australia's announcement that the number of Australia Award scholarships offered to ASEAN Member States will almost double to more than 1,500 in 2017.

17. ASEAN Leaders expressed appreciation to Australia for its continued support for the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) in Jakarta. ASEAN Leaders encouraged Australia's support for the realisation of ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disaster as One in the region and outside the region.

18. We also reaffirmed our commitment to further promote cooperation in combatting emerging infectious diseases, pandemic preparedness, public health, environment, science, technology, climate change, energy security, and food security identified as priorities by ASEAN and Australia.

19. We are also determined to continue all our cooperation on economic, social and environmental matters consistent with and in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, to promote the well-being of the peoples of ASEAN and Australia.

20. We encouraged Australia's continuous support on the concrete implementation of the EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation within the EAS framework, aiming at creating a secure and stable region which will provide an atmosphere conducive to economic development and prosperity. We welcomed the proposed EAS Maritime Security Cooperation Seminar in Australia in November 2016 co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia.

21. The two sides exchanged views on the future cooperation of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations and discussed potential areas of cooperation, especially on the subject of innovation where Australia can share its experience and expertise in the fields of science and technology, climate change, energy security, food security, business development, sustainable agriculture, disaster management and healthcare services.

22. We underlined the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea. We underscored the importance for the states concerned to resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We also emphasized the importance of non-militarization.

The Meeting noted the commitment of ASEAN Member States and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety, and welcomed ASEAN Member States and China's efforts to work towards the early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

23. We emphasised the importance of sustaining our dialogue relations at the highest level and looked forward to Australia hosting a Special ASEAN-Australia Summit in 2018.

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