



CHAIR'S PRESS RELEASE

ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE 75th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (AUMM)

Ha Noi, 21 October 2020, via Videoconference

The ASEAN-United Nations (UN) Ministerial Meeting (AUMM) was held via videoconference for the first time on 21 October 2020. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and 2020 Chair of ASEAN, and was attended by H.E. António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, H.E. Volkan Bozkir, the President of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Lim Jock Hoi, and senior officials of ASEAN and the UN.

The Meeting recognised the unprecedented challenges posed by the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and underscored the importance of enhanced international cooperation in addressing the challenges at hand, as well as strengthening joint efforts towards regional recovery and building resilience for future public health emergencies. The Meeting agreed that the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 are linked with rising gender-based violence- presenting even more security threats, especially to women and children.

The UN welcomed the outcomes of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 on 14 April 2020, the establishment of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN: Rising above Challenges and Sustaining Growth at the 36th ASEAN Summit on 26 June 2020, which demonstrated ASEAN's collective determination and shared commitment to strengthen solidarity, enhance cooperation with external partners, including the UN, and the international community in the fight against COVID-19, as well as mitigate the multi-faceted impact of the pandemic towards sustainable recovery. The Meeting agreed on the importance of a COVID-19 vaccine being available, affordable and accessible to all as a global public good.

The Meeting agreed on the need for a transformative recovery guided by reinvigorated efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and advance climate action. The Meeting took note of the appreciation expressed by the UN Secretary-General to the supports for his appeal for a global ceasefire to promote international peace and security in the midst of the pandemic as well as his Policy Brief on the Impact of COVID-19 on Southeast Asia.

The UN Secretary-General expressed the UN's full support for the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and Implementation Plan which aim to promote inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery.

The Meeting took note of the Joint Report by the ASEAN and UN Secretariats on the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership for the period September 2019-

October 2020, and highlighted the significant progress made across a broad range of activities with 96% of action lines addressed in the first Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the UN (2016-2020). The Meeting adopted the new Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the UN (2021-2025), which will continue to guide both sides in further strengthening the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership in the years to come through several new and expanded areas of technical cooperation, including in cross-sectoral cooperation.

The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of further strengthening the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), including through the Complementarities Initiative, and taking into account the inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities and the prospective role of sub-regional cooperation in regional integration efforts towards narrowing the development gap, promoting sustainable development and realising ASEAN's goal of a people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind. This can be pursued including through the annual High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Promoting the Complementarities Initiative as well as through the existing relevant ASEAN Centres such as the ASEAN Centre on Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD). The meeting reiterated the importance of ASEAN-UN cooperation in implementing accelerated actions and deepening partnership for achieving SDGs by 2030.

The Meeting recognised the importance of further enhancing cooperation in preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention, including in support of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) and the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR). The Meeting noted the outcomes and recommendations of the Seventh ASEAN-UN Workshop – Fifth Regional Dialogue on ASEAN-UN Cooperation on Political-Security Cooperation (AURED V) under the theme “Focused Collaboration in Support of the ASEAN-IPR”, held on 3-4 December 2019 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

The UN appreciated the contribution of ASEAN Member States in support of UN peace operations, including the growing number of women peacekeepers as well as through collaboration in the Triangular Partnership Project on peacekeeping engineering training for troop contributing countries in the region. The Meeting welcomed ASEAN's efforts in advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the UNSC resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), including through the commitment at the ASEAN Leaders' Special Session at the 36th ASEAN Summit on Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age, held on 26 June 2020, and the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's role for Sustainable Peace and Security held on 10 September 2020 on the occasion of the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The UN Secretary-General looked forward and committed technical support to advancing the 'youth, peace and security' agenda in ASEAN under the new ASEAN-UN Plan of Action. The ASEAN Ministers encouraged the UN to continue its support for addressing humanitarian aspects of landmine and other explosive remnant of war issues in the region as well as the world at large by providing technical and financial assistance to support the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC).

Noting that this year marks the 75th Anniversary of the UN, the Meeting reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of ASEAN and the UN to uphold multilateralism and the rule of law in facing global challenges, including the primary

role of the United Nations in the multilateral system committed to strengthening the international-rules based order. The Meeting also reaffirmed its continued support for ASEAN Community building and ASEAN Centrality amidst the evolving regional architecture. The UN welcomed ASEAN's contributions to the maintenance of regional and global peace and security with Indonesia and Viet Nam as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2020. The Meeting also noted the briefings made by the Secretaries-General of ASEAN and the UN at the UNSC in New York in January 2020, which have contributed to reinforcing the fundamental importance of strong partnerships between the United Nations with regional organisations in general and the strengthening of ASEAN-UN relations at the international level, in particular.

The Meeting exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern in areas such as maintaining and promoting regional peace and security, strengthening counterterrorism and the prevention of violent extremism including cybercrime, combatting transnational organised crime, the protection and promotion of human rights, advancing sustainable development including the empowerment of women and girls, tackling climate change and building resilience to climate induced disasters, among others. The UN Secretary-General looked forward to further technical cooperation in support of the comprehensive approaches in the implementation of the 2019-2025 Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism as well as the next Interface Meeting of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights with the United Nations.

The Meeting also discussed the issue of the wave of irregular migration in the region. In this regard, the Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to further collaborate and coordinate in addressing this issue in a broader regional context. ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed their appreciation to the UN for its technical and humanitarian assistance.

Towards maintaining a stable environment conducive to the promotion of recovery and growth in these challenging times, the Meeting reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, one of the most important trade routes in the region. The Meeting emphasized the importance of self-restraint to avoid complicating the situation in the South China Sea, peaceful settlement of disputes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Meeting further reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

The Meeting looked forward to the 11th ASEAN-UN Summit to be held in November 2020.