

34th ASEAN-Australia Forum – Co-Chairs’ Summary

1. The 34th ASEAN-Australia Forum was held via videoconference on 28 April 2022 to discuss ASEAN and Australia’s shared commitment to implementing the newly-established ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, continuing our region’s comprehensive recovery from COVID-19, and addressing other shared regional and international challenges.
2. The Forum was co-chaired by HE Thongphane Savanphet, Lao PDR’s ASEAN SOM Leader and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR; and HE Katrina Cooper, Australian ASEAN SOM Leader and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. The Meeting was attended by Senior Officials from ASEAN member states, Australia, and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC). Australia thanked the Lao PDR for its efforts as the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations for 2021-2024, thanked Malaysia for its support as previous Country Coordinator for 2018-2021, and expressed support for Cambodia’s ASEAN Chair theme “ASEAN A.C.T. – Addressing Challenges Together” in 2022.
3. The Forum expressed sincere condolences for the untimely and tragic passing of HE Ambassador Kamsiah Kamaruddin, Malaysia’s Permanent Representative to ASEAN, on 31 March 2022. The Forum recognised her significant contribution to ASEAN-Australia relations, especially during the 2018-2021 period while Malaysia was Country Coordinator for ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations.
4. The Forum welcomed the agreement at the 1st ASEAN-Australia Summit on 27 October 2021 to establish a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) that is meaningful, substantive and mutually beneficial. The CSP reflects the closeness and substance of our ties, the depth of our shared interests and aspirations, and the strength of our ambition in working together for a more stable and prosperous future for the region.
5. Participants agreed that ASEAN-Australia relations reflected the many threads that draw them together: their geography, their peoples, their economies, and their shared aspirations for the region. The Forum recognised that a strong, cohesive and responsive ASEAN is vital to the region’s success and that ASEAN and Australia are enduring partners for a peaceful, open, inclusive, prosperous and resilient region where international law and the rules-based regional architecture are respected and upheld.
6. The Forum recognised Australia’s unwavering commitment to ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led regional architecture, and support for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which contributes to peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. The Forum noted Australia’s proposal for a Leaders’ Joint Statement on

Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific with a view to promote ASEAN centrality, strengthen ASEAN-led mechanisms, and create an enabling environment for peace, stability and prosperity in the region, which is aimed to be adopted at the second annual ASEAN-Australia Summit in November 2022, and encouraged further work on this proposal. The Forum encouraged Australia's cooperation with ASEAN to advance practical implementation of the AOIP under its four priority areas – connectivity, maritime cooperation, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

ASEAN and Australia's Response to COVID-19

7. The Forum recognised the continuing challenge of responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the emergence and spread of new variants of the virus, and expressed condolences for the loss of lives and livelihoods in the region and around the world. Participants reaffirmed the importance of an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based approach in responding to the pandemic, including addressing the spread of disinformation and misinformation on COVID-19.
8. Australia reaffirmed its support for ASEAN's central role in advancing the region's collective approach to comprehensive recovery from COVID-19 and the critical importance of ASEAN-led regional architecture, including the East Asia Summit (EAS).
9. The Forum welcomed Australia's significant and ongoing support for recovery from COVID-19 in Southeast Asia, including through sharing over 28 million COVID-19 vaccine doses as at 3 May with Southeast Asia including with Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, and Viet Nam; its AUD523 million Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative (VAHSI) for Southeast Asia and the Pacific including its AUD21 million pledge for the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED); and AUD100 million contribution to the Quad Vaccine Partnership announced at the inaugural Quad Leader's Summit in September 2021, along with United States, India and Japan, with a focus on 'last mile' vaccines delivery in Southeast Asian countries.

Review of ASEAN-Australia Relations

10. The Forum welcomed the CSP and recognised that it delivers significant additional substance for our cooperation, underpinned by an AUD154 million package of new signature initiatives announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, including: an AUD124 million *Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative* to support projects jointly identified by ASEAN and Australia that address complex

challenges including health security, terrorism and transnational crime, energy security, promoting the circular economy and healthy oceans, and support implementation of the AOIP; 100 *Australia for ASEAN Scholarships* to support emerging ASEAN leaders to study in Australia in fields that advance the AOIP under its four priority areas of cooperation; and an *Australia for ASEAN Digital Transformation and Futures Skills Initiative* to support our region's futures skills needs, respond to rapid digitalisation, and support long-term economic recovery through a new skills policy dialogue, 350 Vocational Education and Training (VET) scholarships, and technical assistance partnerships between Australian and ASEAN training institutions.

11. The Forum welcomed Australia's current focus on implementing the initiatives under the ASEAN-Australia CSP, particularly in progressing the AUD124 million *Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative*. The Forum noted that Australia would welcome any proposals from ASEAN Member States on cooperation initiatives that could be supported under the *Initiative* and encouraged members to expedite consideration of new governance arrangements to facilitate this. The Forum also welcomed the opening of applications for the Australia for ASEAN Scholarships on 1 February 2022.
12. The Forum noted with satisfaction the significant progress in the implementation of the *Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2020-2024)* across all ASEAN pillars in its second year with 100% of its action lines now being addressed.
13. The Forum agreed that the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN and the Australian Mission to ASEAN will work together to finalise the Annex to the Plan of Action proposed by Australia, to be formally endorsed by ASEAN and Australian Foreign Ministers at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Session with Australia in August 2022. The Annex will reflect joint commitment to the ASEAN-Australia CSP.
14. The Forum discussed ways to further enhance ASEAN-Australia cooperation through the EAS, ARF and ADMM-Plus in a way that supports ASEAN unity and centrality, and reinforces ASEAN-led processes. Participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to continue strengthening the EAS, as the region's premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern and welcomed the EAS' contributions to ASEAN Community-building efforts. The Forum welcomed Australia's active engagement in the ASEAN-led architecture, including: Australia's co-sponsoring of the EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation proposed by Brunei Darussalam and adopted at the 16th EAS on 27 October 2021; co-hosting with Brunei Darussalam of a virtual EAS Workshop on Mental Health Cooperation in the COVID-19 Recovery on 22-23 November 2021;

co-hosting with Singapore and India of a virtual EAS Workshop on Combating Marine Pollution with focus on Marine Plastic Debris on 14-15 February 2022; and co-chairing of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on ICTs Security, alongside Indonesia and the Republic of Korea.

15. The Forum welcomed continued defence cooperation via the ARF and ADMM-Plus, the successful ASEAN-Australia Informal Defence Ministers' Meetings on the sidelines of the ADMM Retreats in February 2020 and November 2021, and Australia's participation in all seven of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Groups (EWG), including co-chairing of the EWG on Military Medicine from 2021 to 2024 with Brunei Darussalam. The Forum noted that Australia had announced its interest in joining the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure, a hotline for ASEAN Defence Ministers and their Plus Country counterparts, expanded its Defence Adviser and Defence Attaché network to cover all ASEAN Member States, and welcomed Australia's announcement that it would double its intake of students in the ASEAN-Australia Defence Postgraduate Scholarship Program from 2022. The Forum noted Australia's proposal to consider convening more regular Informal Defence Ministers' Meetings, subject to approval by the ADMM.

16. The Forum recognised the upcoming 40th anniversary of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Forum noted plans to commemorate this anniversary later in 2022, and the proposal by Australia, the EU and Viet Nam to host a 4th ARF Workshop on Implementing UNCLOS. Participants welcomed ongoing cooperation to address maritime challenges including piracy and armed robbery against ships. They also welcomed efforts to address IUU fishing, highlighting Australian support to regional counter-IUU fishing efforts, including capacity building programs, training cooperation and strengthening the RPOA-IUU Secretariat, and the ARF workshop hosted by Australia, India and Indonesia on Law of the Sea and Fisheries on 7-8 December 2021. The Forum acknowledged efforts to promote the sustainable development of the seas and oceans, including addressing the issue of marine pollution. It encouraged efforts to implement EAS Leaders' commitment to enhance regional maritime security cooperation, including through the implementation of the EAS Leaders' Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation and the EAS Leaders' Statement on Marine Sustainability. Participants noted Australia co-hosting with India the 5th EAS Maritime Security Conference on 23-24 November 2021, which saw discussion on resource sharing, science and technology cooperation and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Forum also noted the 4th ARF Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation hosted on 6-7 April 2022 by Australia, the EU, and Viet Nam, and welcomed the proposal by the three countries to establish an ARF online working group on Guidelines for Preventing and Managing Incidents Between Maritime Law Enforcement Units, which received broad support from ASEAN Member States in the 2021 ARF SOM. Australia offered its support for the Philippines'

hosting of the 12th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and 10th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) this year.

17. The Forum welcomed the strong ongoing cooperation between ASEAN and Australia on cybersecurity and building confidence in cyberspace, including the Australia-Indonesia co-hosted workshop on implementing the 11 voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace in March 2022 through the ARF ICTs Security workstream. The Forum noted important regional and bilateral cooperation, including with the ASEAN Secretariat, in strengthening cyber resilience in Southeast Asia through Australia's AUD74 million Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program which supports an open, free and secure Internet that drives economic growth, protects national security and promotes international stability. The Forum also encouraged the use of existing centres of excellence, including the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre and the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence in enhancing cybersecurity cooperation. Participants looked forward to the convening of the next ASEAN-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue as soon as practicable.
18. The Forum welcomed the ongoing cooperation between ASEAN and Australia on countering terrorism and violent extremism in the region through ASEAN-led forums, including Australia's co-chairing of the ARF Seminar on the Role of Youth in Building Digital Resilience to Prevent and Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism on 15 March 2022, and reaffirmed its commitment to continuing this important work. The Forum looked forward to the ARF Workshop on Aviation Security and Information Sharing on 18-20 May 2022 co-chaired by the Philippines, Australia, and the U.S., to discuss and enhance cooperation on aviation security as an essential component of counter-terrorism measures. The Forum also looked forward to inaugurating an ASEAN-Australia Dialogue on Counter-terrorism to further our collaboration.
19. The Forum discussed the important and long-standing collaboration between ASEAN and Australia on law enforcement, border management, customs and immigration to counter trafficking in persons, illicit drugs and online child exploitation, and other transnational crimes. This includes cooperation through the Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) framework, under which the 15th SOMTC + Australia Consultation was held on 28 July 2021; the ASEAN-Australia Political Security Partnership (APSP) under which Australia will be supporting new activities related to cybercrime and countering radicalisation and violent extremism; and through the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking program (ASEAN-ACT). The Forum also welcomed the contribution for the new Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative to strengthen regional responses to terrorism and transnational crime.

20. The Forum recognised the importance of promoting and protecting human rights in the region, and welcomed the continuing close cooperation between ASEAN and Australia, particularly through Australia's engagement with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) under which the latest AICHR-Australia Consultation was held on 24 November 2021.
21. The Forum noted the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls, and recognised the importance of gender-responsive approach to recovery from COVID-19, as articulated in the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. The Forum welcomed continuing progress in the collaboration between ASEAN and Australia in advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, including through the successful Second ASEAN-Australia WPS Dialogue themed "Women, Peace and Security: Progressing Implementation on the Road to Recovery from COVID-19" co-hosted by Australia and Viet Nam on 9 November 2021. The Forum welcomed Australia's recent announcement of Women Together, of AUD300 million over five years, which will promote women's economic empowerment, women's leadership, women and girls' rights and gender-based violence prevention. The package also supports ASEAN's gender equality priorities and achievement of ASEAN's gender outcomes. The Forum noted the successful inaugural Southeast Asia Dialogue of Women Leaders, co-hosted by Australia and Indonesia on 18 March 2022. The inaugural dialogue brought together Ministers and Leaders from government, the private sector and civil society across Southeast Asia, fostering collaboration in achieving gender equality and addressing critical issues for women in the region.
22. The Forum recognised that ASEAN Member States and Australia are significant economic partners, with the ASEAN region representing 12.6 per cent of Australia's total trade in 2020. Total two-way trade between ASEAN and Australia amounted to over AUD101 billion in 2020 - 2021 and two-way investment amounted cumulatively to over AUD240 billion in 2020, based on Australian data.
23. The Forum welcomed the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement on 1 January 2022 for 10 Parties, namely Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Japan, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam; on 1 February 2022 for ROK; and on 18 March 2022 for Malaysia. Participants looked forward to the successful ratification of RCEP by all signatories, and will work together to establish strong institutions to ensure effective governance and full implementation of the RCEP Agreement and its built-in agenda.
24. The Forum welcomed continuing progress to upgrade the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) to

ensure that it remains modern, high-quality, relevant to businesses and supports a long-term post-pandemic economic recovery. The Forum noted the commitment by ASEAN Ministers in September 2021 to concluding a substantive upgrade by September 2022. The Forum also welcomed Australia's ongoing commitment to working with ASEAN Member States to implement RCEP and AANZFTA commitments through the AUD46 million Regional Trade for Development Initiative, announced in November 2020.

25. The Forum noted ongoing cooperation to support Southeast Asia's inclusive economic recovery and further regional economic integration, including through supporting implementation and monitoring of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. Participants welcomed Australia's commitment of AUD80 million for *Australia for ASEAN – Economic and Connectivity (Aus4ASEAN–ECON)*, a successor to Australia's flagship economic cooperation program, the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II (AADCP II), to continue supporting ASEAN's priorities on connectivity, regional integration and narrowing the development gap including through support for the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025), Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan IV (2021-2025), digital transformation, response to the fourth industrial revolution, closer sectoral integration and private sector engagement.
26. The Forum discussed the importance of a strong digital economy, including safe, secure, and resilient digital infrastructure and digital connectivity to facilitate our region's strong economic recovery. Participants welcomed ongoing cooperation to boost Southeast Asia's digital transformation, harness digital economy opportunities, bridge the divide for access to and meaningful participation in the digital economy for women and persons with disabilities, and support the development of digital-ready infrastructures, workforces and cities, including through the extended ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards Initiative, the ASEAN Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap for Digital Transformation and the utilisation of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy and the ASEAN-Australia Smart Cities Initiative.
27. The Forum recognised the importance of narrowing the development gap between and within ASEAN Member States, including through the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan IV (2021-2025), and enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a region. ASEAN welcomed Australia's commitment to promote equitable and sustainable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning subregional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN. The Forum welcomed Australia's new and continued contributions to the Mekong subregion, including the Mekong-Australia Partnership, to narrow the development gap, promote human resource

development, and support economic resilience and sustainable water resources management.

28. The Forum reaffirmed the ongoing need for ASEAN and Australia to continue working closely together on health outcomes, as demonstrated throughout our region's collective response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening health systems and mitigating future pandemics. The Forum welcomed Australia's significant additional support to ASEAN and the region on health initiatives, including through the commitment of AUD21 million for the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) of which AUD6 million has been disbursed; AUD1 million contribution to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund; and AUD5 million ASEAN-Australia Health Security Initiative (AAHSI). Under AAHSI, Australia looked forward to ASEAN's early decision on the host country of ACPHEED to ensure that its funding can be well utilised. The Forum recognised the work of the AUD4.3 million ASEAN-Australia Health Security Fellowship program and the ASEAN-Australia One Health Fellowship program to develop expertise and capacity in the region, as well as cultivate information sharing, to support responses to the pandemic.
29. The Forum also recognised the importance of working together to address mental health, and noted the good progress on the Roadmap on ASEAN-Australia Mental Health Cooperation. The Forum welcomed the virtual ASEAN-Australia Youth Mental Health Dialogue convened by Australia in April 2022, which brought together youth, civil society and policymakers from health, youth and education sectors to discuss cross-cutting aspects of mental health in the region.
30. The Forum recalled our strong people-to-people links, and long-running cooperation in education, including through the New Colombo Plan and Australia Awards scholarships, which continued to provide opportunities for Southeast Asian and Australian students, with programs now resuming on an in-person basis. The Forum welcomed Australia's cooperation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), including the new Australia for ASEAN Digital Transformation and Future Skills initiative and TVET scholarships. Participants acknowledged the contribution of other education, sports, arts and cultural programs between ASEAN and Australia, including activities supported by the Australia-ASEAN Council, which continue to deepen social, cultural and business linkages, support interfaith dialogue, foster youth entrepreneurship and build on links between ASEAN and Australia. The Forum looked forward to resuming in-person linkages between ASEAN and Australia across these initiatives, following Australia's border re-opening.

31. The Forum discussed shared environmental challenges, including climate change, natural disasters and protecting the health and biodiversity of our oceans. ASEAN and Australia committed to enhancing practical cooperation to protect oceans and combat marine debris, including through implementation of the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Combating Marine Plastic Debris and support for the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris and the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States (2021 – 2025). The Forum also welcomed global efforts to develop a new international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, with work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee expected to be finalised in 2024. Participants noted Australia's commitment to phase out recyclable waste exports and welcomed opportunities to work together in promoting a circular economy. The Forum noted that Australia, with Singapore and India, convened an EAS Workshop on Combatting Marine Pollution, especially Marine Plastic Debris, on 14-15 February 2022. Participants discussed actions to address the adverse effects of climate change in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, including through the Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative. The Forum also underlined the importance of enhancing sustainable development cooperation, including through the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue, in areas of mutual interest.
32. The Forum welcomed Australia's ongoing assistance to enhance ASEAN's resilience and capacity to respond to natural disasters, including support for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025 and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).
33. The Forum reaffirmed the commitment to continue exploring ways to provide capacity-building assistance to Timor-Leste, especially through participation in non-policy making activities in ASEAN. The Forum noted Australia's announcement of support to strengthen Timor-Leste's engagement in multilateral forums, notably ASEAN and the WTO, including through building Timor-Leste's capacity to enter into regional trade agreements. The Forum looked forward to the convening of the ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Fact-Finding Missions, when circumstances allow, after which a comprehensive assessment of Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership will be developed.

Regional and international issues

34. Participants discussed the AUKUS partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, during which views were expressed on its implications for the region. The Forum welcomed Australia's continued support and reaffirmation for ASEAN Centrality and commitment to promote regional peace, stability and security, in accordance with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as well as the steadfast commitment to meet all its obligations as a non-nuclear weapon state under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
35. Participants expressed deep concern regarding the evolving situation and conflict in Ukraine, including the worsening humanitarian situation and widespread suffering of innocent civilians, and called for an immediate ceasefire and a continuation of political dialogue that would lead to sustainable peace in Ukraine. Australia also called for the immediate withdrawal of forces from Ukraine. The Forum reaffirmed the importance of seeking a peaceful resolution, in accordance with international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter, TAC, and the AOIP. For peace, security, and harmonious co-existence to prevail, it is the responsibility of all parties to uphold the principles of mutual respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and equal rights of all nations. The Forum supported the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for an independent investigation of all alleged atrocities against innocent civilians, including in Bucha, to avoid a repeat and to honour justice, as outlined in the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Reported Killing of Civilians in Ukraine, delivered on 8 April 2022. Australia noted the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Situation in Ukraine delivered on 26 February 2022, and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement Calling for a Ceasefire in Ukraine delivered on 3 March 2022. The Forum noted ASEAN's readiness to facilitate, in any possible way, peaceful dialogue among parties concerned.
36. The Forum discussed the ongoing situation in Myanmar, and participants recalled the ASEAN Chairman's Statement on the Situation in Myanmar of 2 February 2022, which reiterated the urgent need for the Myanmar authorities to take concrete actions to effectively and fully implement the Five Point Consensus reached at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021. The Forum affirmed its support for Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn of Cambodia as the current ASEAN Chair's Special Envoy. Participants reaffirmed the importance of the ASEAN Chair's Special Envoy being able to meet with all parties concerned. Participants encouraged the Special Envoy to coordinate closely with the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General on Myanmar to ensure synergy in this important endeavour. Australia expressed its deep concern at developments in Myanmar and called for the cessation of violence and the release of political detainees including foreigners, such as Australian Professor Sean Turnell.

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Australia called on countries to implement the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/287. Australia also reiterated its call for Myanmar to ensure access to humanitarian assistance for all people in need and to engage in dialogue to support a return to democracy. Australia noted its consistent support for ASEAN's leadership in responding to the crisis, and reaffirmed its commitment to continue providing humanitarian assistance to those in need in Myanmar, including through AUD5 million to support the AHA Centre's Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar, consistent with ASEAN's Five Point Consensus.

37. The Forum reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region, and other lawful uses of the seas. The Forum took note of concerns expressed by some participants over developments in the South China Sea that may further complicate the situation, escalate tensions and undermine peace and stability in the region. The Forum further emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may complicate the situation. The Forum reaffirmed the need to pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Forum emphasised the importance of compliance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).