

CO-CHAIRS' PRESS STATEMENT
THE ASEAN-GCC FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

New York, 27 September 2018

1. The ASEAN-GCC Foreign Ministers Meeting was held on 27 September 2018 in New York, the United States, at the sidelines of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, and H.E. Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait. The meeting was attended by Foreign Ministers or Representatives of ASEAN Member States and GCC Member Countries, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, and the Secretary General of the GCC.
2. The Meeting highlighted the historical bond, cultural connection, and decades of friendship shared between the Middle East and Southeast Asia, which served as a foundation for ASEAN-GCC cooperation and contributions for peace and security in the region.
3. ASEAN welcomed GCC's continued support for ASEAN Community building and for the development of a regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based.
4. ASEAN and GCC reaffirmed the importance of inter-regional ties, including ASEAN-GCC relations, in promoting peace, prosperity and the well-being for the peoples in Asia and beyond. The Meeting stressed the immense potential for growing cooperation between ASEAN and GCC and its associated benefits and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening ASEAN-GCC relations as envisaged in the Joint Vision adopted at the First ASEAN-GCC Ministerial Meeting in Manama, Bahrain in June 2009.
5. The Meeting discussed the future directions of ASEAN-GCC cooperation, explored ways and means to enhance substantive developments in the relations. In this connection, the Meeting agreed to work towards the finalization of the ASEAN-GCC Framework of Cooperation for 2018-2022 which identifies activities and measures to be jointly undertaken in areas of mutual interest such as trade and investment, Islamic finance, equitable development, energy, tourism, infrastructure and connectivity, agriculture and Halal products, food security, public health, education and training, labor, as well as cultural and other people-to-people exchanges.

6. The Meeting agreed on the value of increasing direct engagement between ASEAN and GCC in all areas of cooperation at different levels, including the regular convening of ASEAN-GCC Ministerial Meetings, the meetings between the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and the GCC Ambassadors in Jakarta, and close collaboration between the two Secretariats as well as among relevant bodies of both sides.
7. The Meeting exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest and concern such as protectionism, terrorism and violent extremism, geopolitical conflicts, sustainable development, and climate change, among others. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of a free and open market, adherence to the rule of law and a rules-based international system, the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law including UNCLOS 1982, and the need for greater and closer international collaboration in addressing emerging challenges and promotion of tolerance and moderation.
