



## **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMIT**

**KUALA LUMPUR, 21 NOVEMBER 2015**

### ***OUR PEOPLE, OUR COMMUNITY, OUR VISION***

The 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Summit was chaired by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Honourable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak and was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 21 November 2015. It was attended by all Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member States, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

2. We noted with satisfaction the progress in ASEAN Plus Three cooperation over the past 17 years and reiterated our commitment to further intensify and expand it to include all areas of cooperation, including cross-cutting issues such as Connectivity and narrowing the development divide. We reaffirmed ASEAN Plus Three cooperation as a driving force for enhanced peace, security and prosperity in the East Asian region, with the long term goal of building an East Asia community.

3. Recalling the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) II Report which was adopted at the ASEAN Plus Three Commemorative Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 19 November 2012 recommending the realisation of an East Asia Economic Community by 2020 as the main pillar of ASEAN Plus Three vision, we adopted the Final Report on the Follow-up to the EAVG II Recommendations which would pave the way towards greater ASEAN Plus Three integration, complementing the initiatives of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2013-2017.

4. We acknowledged the importance of maintaining and enhancing peace, security and stability in the East Asian region and emphasised the need to enhance efforts to address emerging challenges in the areas of traditional and non-traditional security. Towards this end, we agreed to strengthen political-security cooperation as contained in the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2013-2017).

5. We welcomed the continued growth in trade and investment relations between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries. Total trade with Plus Three countries reached US\$727.1 billion in 2014, which accounted for 28.8 per cent of total ASEAN trade, while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow from Plus Three Countries reached US\$26.7 billion, which amounted to 19.6 per cent in 2014. We expressed confidence that through trade and investment relations, the region would maintain its positive growth trajectory despite on-going global financial instability.

6. We acknowledged that collaboration between ASEAN and Plus Three countries remained important in ensuring the strong economic foundation in the region and underlined that the full utilisation of the ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Agreement with the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea respectively would contribute significantly to enhancing sustainability of the Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the region.

7. We recognised the important role of the private sector in enhancing economic cooperation in the East Asian region and appreciated the continuous efforts made by the East Asia Business Council (EABC) in providing private sector feedback to deepen intra-regional trade and investment and in strengthening cooperation among the private sectors in ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea through its various initiatives and activities. We welcomed the positive outcome of the inaugural ASEAN Plus Three interface with the East Asia Business Council and looked forward to more such dialogues between ASEAN Plus Three Leaders and the Council.

8. We expressed confidence that the region's economies will remain resilient and maintain their positive trajectory despite the volatile global economic environment. Given the immense potential of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to further regional economic integration, uphold ASEAN centrality and further improve the region's influence on the global stage, we welcomed the substantial progress achieved in all areas of negotiations and tasked our Economic Ministers to further intensify efforts towards the early conclusion of negotiations.

9. Against the backdrop of heightened volatility in the global financial market, we reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) as part of the regional financial safety net to maintain financial stability in ASEAN and East Asia. To further complement CMIM, we welcomed the transition of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) to an International Organisation, operating as an independent regional surveillance unit to monitor and analyse regional economies and support CMIM initiatives.

10. We acknowledged progress made under the Asian Bond Market Initiative (ABMI), particularly in developing efficient and liquid regional bond markets through the Credit Guarantee and Investment Facility (CGIF), the Cross-border Settlement Infrastructure Forum (CSIF), the ASEAN+3 Multi-Currency Bond Issuance Framework (AMBIF) and the ASEAN+3 Bond Market Forum (ABMF) to help alleviate financial volatility and contribute to economic and financial stability in the East Asia region.

11. We underscored the importance of strengthening and broadening tourism cooperation in promoting people-to-people linkages in the East Asian region and looked forward to the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation on ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Cooperation in 2016.

12. We emphasised the importance of mitigating the threat of climate change to the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors in East Asia. We reaffirmed the important role of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) Agreement as a mechanism to strengthen regional food security and reducing poverty. To further improve its efficiency, we

took note of the need to consider alternative staple food crops in addition to rice. To further complement APTERR, we encouraged the development of technology and a framework to have early warning information on impending food emergencies in the region through the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS). We further welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Plus Three Bioenergy and Food Security Framework 2015-2025 with the objective of supporting ASEAN Member States' efforts to ensure sustainable, food-secure and climate-friendly bioenergy for economic development. We also acknowledged the importance of establishing food value chains through Public-Private Partnership, and encouraged the sharing of best practices, development and exchanges of agro and agro-industry technologies, and market management to increase the value of food supply chains.

13. We recognised the need to ensure energy security in the region by promoting energy diversification through renewable energy development, energy efficiency and conservation and the use of green technology. We welcomed the enhancement and deepening of cooperation through knowledge transfer at an affordable cost in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Further, we took note that clean coal, including high efficiency coal-fired power generation would contribute towards energy security and the potential reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

14. We recognised youth as an essential asset to a nation's development and stressed the importance of continuous engagement at all levels. With over 60% of the ASEAN population today comprising those under 35 years of age, they will be the driving force in shaping the future of ASEAN. We welcomed the outcome of the ASEAN Young Leaders' Summit 2015, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 18-20 November 2015 with the theme '*Youth Driving the ASEAN Community*', which was an avenue for youth from around ASEAN to build and leverage networks towards creating a cohesive ASEAN identity.

15. We highlighted the need to address environmental issues effectively, particularly on trans-boundary pollution and to intensify efforts to ensure sustainable development in the region. We reaffirmed our commitment to the implementation of sustainable forest management through enhancing capacity-building and the need to further strengthen cooperation and joint approaches in addressing forestry and environmental management issues.

16. The Plus Three Countries welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change at the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, which reaffirms ASEAN's commitment to collectively work towards addressing climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We emphasised the commitment to conclude an ambitious, durable and legally binding global climate agreement acceptable to all at the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015.

17. We reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing cooperation in education at the regional level. The Plus Three Countries welcomed the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education at the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit. We noted the progress in developing the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility.

18. We noted with satisfaction the implementation of the ASEAN Conference on Civil Service Matters Plus Three (ACCSM+3) Work Plan (2012-2015) and looked forward to the adoption of the ACCSM+3 Work Plan 2016-2020 to further promote good governance.

19. We acknowledged the important role played by the information sector to ensure that multi-flow of information is in place to raise awareness on ASEAN and in the East Asia region. Towards this end, we looked forward to the full and effective implementation of the Work Plan on Enhancing ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation through Information and Media (2012-2017).

20. We recognised the importance of Science and Technology as powerful enablers of economic development in the East Asia region and looked forward to the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025 with clear and effective mechanisms to further cooperation with Dialogue Partners.

21. We expressed concern over the threat of infectious diseases in the region, including the recent outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and encouraged the Plus Three Countries to continue supporting the Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs) Programme, which has engendered fruitful collaboration in the region. We acknowledged the need to pursue stronger cooperation under the ASEAN post-2015 Health Development Agenda.

22. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen regional cooperation in the area of disaster management and emphasised the importance of continued support for the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) and the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), including its post-2015 work programme.

23. We recognised the importance for ASEAN to be better connected in ensuring freer movement of people, goods, services and capital. The ASEAN Leaders appreciated the Plus Three countries' support in the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and welcomed their support and assistance to further enhance regional connectivity. We looked forward to the conclusion of a post-2015 ASEAN Connectivity agenda which would be bold, visionary and contain concrete and feasible measures which would contribute to seamless connectivity in the East Asia region. Noting that financing mobilisation is an important factor in moving the ASEAN Connectivity agenda forward, we welcomed progress in the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank by China as well as the proposed Partnership for Quality Infrastructure by Japan to address infrastructure financing needs in the region.

24. We also recognised that regional integration and narrowing the development divide are priorities in the ASEAN community-building process and welcomed a post-2015 Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) agenda and a successor document to the IAI Work Plan II. Noting that IAI is cross-cutting in nature, we called for closer collaboration among the various ASEAN sectoral bodies in ensuring the full participation and realisation of regional commitments and initiatives.

25. We acknowledged the contribution made by Track 1.5 and Track 2 initiatives in promoting rich discussions on a wide range of issues, including the East Asia Forum (EAF), which provides a platform for think-tanks, business and academia to provide proposals for deepening East Asia regional cooperation. We further welcomed the contribution of the Network on East Asia Think-tanks (NEAT) in supporting East Asian community-building and noted with interest NEAT Memorandum No. 12.

26. We acknowledged the role played by the ASEAN-China Centre, ASEAN-Japan Centre and ASEAN-Korea Centre in promoting trade and investment, tourism and cultural exchanges. We encouraged these Centres to establish greater synergies with other establishments such as the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC), East Asia Business Council (EABC) and the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat in promoting ASEAN in the East Asia region in the larger context of the ASEAN Plus Three framework.

27. The ASEAN Leaders congratulated the Leaders of the Plus Three Countries on the successful convening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Summit, held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea on 1 November 2015 and expressed the view that the positive momentum in China-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation would contribute to the promotion and maintenance of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

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