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ASEAN'S JOURNEY AS A POLITICAL
AND SECURITY COMMUNITY

one vision
one identity
one community

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ASEAN: A Community of Opportunities for All

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ASEAN's Journey as a Political and Security Community: A Snapshot of 2018 and a Preview of 2019

The ASEAN Secretariat
Jakarta

Foreword

More than half a century ago, ASEAN was founded to promote economic growth, social progress and cultural development in stability in the Southeast Asian region through multilateral cooperation. Anchored on the principle that *national resilience* would promote *regional resilience*, the unique contribution of each ASEAN Member State in ASEAN's agenda, such as its community building project, has always been critical. Conversely, regional stability would enable Member States to pursue their respective national developments.

Today, the rapidly evolving regional geo-political and economic environment is making ASEAN's community building efforts a challenging endeavour. Nevertheless, ASEAN reaffirm its commitment to implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the importance of maintaining ASEAN Centrality and unity in community building efforts and engagement with external partners, including the major powers.

While ASEAN exerts efforts to address a host of non-traditional security challenges that impact on its peoples, traditional set of challenges including potential regional flashpoints exist. Meanwhile, ASEAN has to make the necessary adjustments in an increasingly cyber connected world, with cyber security challenges becoming more pronounced. Therefore, it is imperative for ASEAN to continue providing platforms where external partners engage each other. It is equally imperative that regional mechanisms remain centred on ASEAN.

It is in this context of staying on course and to deepen the sense of being Community among its members where it is useful to review in broad strokes what have transpired in the previous years and have a glance as to what is in store for the current year. Such exercise would enable ASEAN and its Member States to reflect on what have been achieved; it would also contribute in thinking through what could be undertaken further. This is what this first issue of the *"APSC Outlook"* attempts to provide: a modest contribution towards taking stock, thinking through and looking ahead of where ASEAN has come thus far in its journey as a political and security community.

Implicit in this publication's name *"Outlook"* is the message that in examining how ASEAN evolves as a political-security community, it is useful to look forward and beyond. Contributions to succeeding issues of the *"Outlook"* are welcome. It is hoped that this publication would contribute in nurturing a forward looking mindset and in promoting a collaborative approach on issues that ASEAN faces. Views may be divergent but they are useful in promoting a better understanding of issues, thereby encouraging collaboration among stakeholders, both within and external to ASEAN.

DATO LIM JOCK HOI
Secretary-General of ASEAN

Introduction

The year 2019 marks the fourth year of implementation of the *ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.* Commencing in 2016, the Blueprint provides a roadmap for elevating political and security cooperation in ASEAN to "an even higher level" along the following lines: a rules-based, people oriented, people-centred community; peaceful, secure and stable region; ASEAN Centrality in a dynamic and outward looking region; and strengthened ASEAN institutional capacity and presence.

With 258 of the total 290 items contained in the Blueprint having been addressed mid-way into 2019, much progress has been made but more needs to be done. Not only do the remaining action lines need to be acted upon, momentum will have to be sustained in areas where efforts have been previously poured into as ASEAN's theme for 2019 *"Advancing Partnerships for Sustainability"* underscores.

Indeed, while the theme of *Innovation and Resilience* marked the previous year, highlighting the need for ASEAN to innovate and be resilient in the fast changing geo-political, economic and technological landscape, this year's theme stresses the importance of sustaining and building upon what currently exist.

It is therefore useful to take stock of what have transpired in 2018, specifically along the areas of addressing current and emerging challenges and community building efforts. These two areas of concern may be separate from each other but they nonetheless

complement one another. The ability to deal with challenges contributes to building a sense of community in the same manner that a deeper sense of belonging to the community enhances the capacity to address challenges that come along the way.

From Frameworks to Tangible Action

In 2018, Sectoral Bodies of the ASEAN Political Security pillar have invested in formulating appropriate frameworks that would enable their respective sectors to deal with challenges under their purview. For the defence sector, for example, the *Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (GAME)* was adopted. This set of guidelines, which complements and builds upon a 2017-adopted *Concept Paper on Guidelines for Maritime Interaction*, is meant to serve as a practical confidence building measure for militaries to improve operational safety in the air.

Beyond the frameworks developed, activities were undertaken to enhance capacity to deal with challenges and build confidence and thrust.

Likewise adopted by the defence sector is the *Concept Paper on Our Eyes Initiative*, with the end view of creating a platform for strategic intelligence exchange to counter terrorism. Meanwhile, ASEAN's sector on transnational crimes adopted the *ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism*. These two frameworks are expected to complement each other and highlight that dealing with terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation necessitates the concerted efforts of both the defence and law enforcement sectors.

On a wider front, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) composed of 27 participants adopted the *Terms of Reference for the Open Ended*

Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs. Under the ambit of the *ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs*, this study group will develop proposals on confidence building measures (CBMs) to address the whole range of issues relating to ICTs Security, submit consensus reports recommending CBMs, as well as develop processes and procedures for sharing of information between ARF Participants to prevent ICT crises, criminal and terrorist use of ICTs.

Beyond the frameworks developed, activities were undertaken both to enhance capacity to deal with the challenges confronting ASEAN and the wider region and to build confidence and trust among the participating stakeholders.

For 2018, a total of 13 *ad hoc* activities have been undertaken by the ARF mainly in the areas of maritime security, disaster relief, preventive diplomacy, and counter-terrorism and transnational crime. For the defence sector, a total of 11 activities have been undertaken by the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Experts' Working Groups on maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, military medicine, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action and cybersecurity.

While majority of the military exercises organised by the working groups are expected to take place in 2019 in accordance with their respective work programmes adopted in 2017,

previous years' discussions regarding an ASEAN-China maritime exercise resulted in a field training exercise in Zhanjiang, China in late 2018. Participated by all ASEAN Member States, the field training exercise with China focused on maritime safety and application of the *Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES)* as a means of communication in the event of incidents at sea.

Meanwhile, there is an increasing realisation that issues confronting ASEAN and the region cut across pillars and sectors, with each pillar and sector addressing a specific aspect of an issue. To date, 37 such issues have been identified. The latest addition came with the adoption of the *ASEAN Enabling Master Plan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* during the 33rd ASEAN Summit in November 2018.

Cross-Cutting and Cross-Pillar Issues	
Trafficking in Persons and People Smuggling	Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
Maritime Security/Cooperation	Climate Change, Food Security and Food Safety
Counter-Terrorism	Education, Science and Technology
Cybersecurity/Cybercrime	Sustainable Development Cooperation
Peacekeeping/Post-conflict peacebuilding	Timor-Leste's Application for ASEAN Membership
Human Rights	Social Protection
Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)	ASEAN Awareness and Identity
Illicit Drug Trafficking	Strengthening Coordination among the ASEAN Community Pillars
Pharmaceuticals	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
Environmental Crime	Health and Health Related Issues (Active Ageing)
Money Laundering and International Economic Crime	Anti-Corruption
Nuclear Safety/Nuclear Security	Connectivity
Border Management	Innovation
Climate Change	Food Safety
Good Governance	Fourth Industrial Revolution
Sustainable Tourism	Culture of Prevention
Skilled Labour, Skills Development, and Skill Recognition	Free Trade Agreements
Inclusive Employment	ASEAN Enabling Master Plan
Entrepreneurship and Women Economic Empowerment	

Dealing with cross-cutting and cross-pillar issues necessitates greater coordination among various Sectoral Bodies on the one hand and, on the other hand, a specific Sectoral Body serving as the lead shepherd to promote synergy and ensure that momentum is sustained.

In 2018, three Sectoral Bodies under the Political-Security Community pillar have manifested their readiness to serve as lead shepherds for the following: trafficking in person and counter-terrorism (*Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime [SOMTC]*), illicit drug trafficking (*ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters [ASOD]*) and border management (*ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs [DGICM]*).

Sectoral bodies have explored frameworks on how partners could be meaningfully engaged.

Meanwhile, with the Leaders during the 33rd ASEAN Summit having agreed on the need to establish a formal mechanism for cooperation regarding the cross-cutting issue of cyber security, there is a need to identify which Sectoral Body should serve as the lead as regards the proposed mechanism and thresh out measures needed to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of efforts.

Moving with Partners

In meeting challenges as well as in community building efforts, engaging external partners is indeed useful, prompting Sectoral Bodies under the Political-Security Community pillar to explore frameworks on how partners could be meaningfully engaged.

The defence sector, for example, has adopted in 2018 a set of criteria for allowing other interested partners to take part as

observers in the activities of the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Groups. While membership in the ADMM-Plus is currently limited to ASEAN and eight of its dialogue partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the US), it was decided in 2017 to allow other countries to take part as observers in recognition of the need to meaningfully engage other so-called non-Plus countries as well as given the increasing number of countries requesting to be part of the ADMM-Plus.

In the same manner, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) has adopted a set of guiding criteria and modalities in engaging external partners, both for the AMMD and its subsidiary mechanisms. These guiding criteria will be applicable for all AMMD-related meetings from 2019 onwards.

Complementing the mechanisms whereby partners are engaged collectively are ASEAN's Plus One dialogue relations, which enables ASEAN to work with a specific partner. Its dialogue relations with its Northeast Asian neighbours produced the following in 2018: *a Strategic Partnership Vision 2030* with China, an *Agreement on Technical Cooperation (TCA) to support ASEAN Community Building* with Japan, and a commitment from Korea to double its contributions to ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund.

In the wider Asia-Pacific, ASEAN's relations with Australia in 2018 resulted in a *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation*

Leaders of ASEAN and its external partners are committed in moving cooperation forward.

to Counter International Terrorism and 15 new cooperation activities. Two new development programmes from the US commenced: the *ASEAN-USAID Partnership for Regional Optimization within the Political Security and Socio-Cultural Communities (PROSPECT)* and the *ASEAN-USAID Inclusive Growth in ASEAN through Innovation,*

Trade and E-Commerce (IGNITE). And from Europe, two flagship programmes with the European Union were launched: *Enhanced Regional ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READ)* and the *Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE-Plus).* A financial agreement for EU's support to the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) was likewise signed.

ASEAN's relations with Russia has been elevated to strategic partnership bringing to eight the total number of ASEAN's strategic partners, with Australia, China, Japan, India, South Korea, New Zealand, and the US being the other seven.

Two countries (Argentina and Iran) have acceded to the ASEAN's *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia* (TAC) in 2018. Peru's request to accede was likewise approved by ASEAN in 2018 and that of South Africa in early 2019. Once Peru and South Africa formally accede, the TAC would have 29 non-ASEAN contracting parties in addition to the 10 ASEAN Member States.

Building upon what exists has characterised ASEAN political security cooperation.

Critical in moving cooperation forward is the political commitment of Leaders both of ASEAN and its external partners. It is this sense where the five statements on smart cities, ICT and digital economy, marine debris, foreign terrorist fighters and nuclear security issued at the 13th East Asia Summit in 2018 ought to be appreciated.

Navigating 2019

Building upon what exists has characterised ASEAN political security cooperation in the last 51 years. Within the ambit of

the 2019 theme *Advancing Partnerships for Sustainability* under Thailand's Chairmanship, "maintaining sustainable peace, security and stability in the region remains a key priority, including through (1) enhanced border management; (2) enhanced cooperation to combat transnational crimes; and (3) promoting an ASEAN-centred regional architecture".

Momentum will surely be sustained in addressing political and security challenges, one of which is the humanitarian situation in the Rakhine State. Following the invitation extended by the Government of Myanmar to the AHA Centre to conduct the Needs Assessment in Rakhine, the Preliminary Needs Assessment has been successfully implemented in April 2019. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment will be launched once the repatriation process begins.

Initiatives to promote sustainability focusing on cross-pillar issues have been tabled.

It is anticipated that following the adoption in 2017 of the Framework for Negotiating the South China Sea Code of Conduct and the agreement in 2018 to have a single negotiating text, the first reading of this text will be undertaken in 2019. Expectations, however, have to be tempered. While it is the intention of all parties to conclude an effective Code of Conduct (COC), there are divergent views as to the shape of the COC. Nonetheless, the positive developments in recent years (adoption of the framework of negotiation, commencement of formal negotiations, agreement to have a single negotiating text) have brought the region closer to the long awaited and much sought for Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Anticipated to be signed in 2019 is the Practical Arrangement between ASEAN and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Spearheaded by the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on

Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM), a 2013-established network of regulatory bodies on atomic energy among ASEAN members, these set of practical arrangements would promote nuclear safety, security and safeguards within the region.

Thailand as the 2019 ASEAN Chair has tabled several initiatives to "promote sustainability of things" focusing on cross-cutting issues. These include (1) addressing the maritime debris challenges, including through the convening of a Special Ministerial Meeting on Maritime Debris; (2) launching a human capital development initiative with the support of the World Bank; (3) developing an ASEAN Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Task Force; and (4) tackling the challenge of an ageing society through the launch of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation.

Thailand is likewise keen on having a roadmap on border management issued at the Leaders' level. This roadmap would promote an ASEAN-wide border management cooperation to strike a balance between border management and cross-border facilitation.

Relations with existing partners are expected to be further deepened. The various action plans of ASEAN's bilateral partners

Relations with current partners will be deepened and with new ones, explored.

that are in place would ensure that cooperative activities remain on track. Relations with new partners will be explored given that a number of potential partners have signified their intent to either become a dialogue partner, sectoral dialogue partner, development partner or accede to the TAC.

Non-ASEAN countries have likewise expressed interest to accede to the *ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT)*.

While a provision on the accession of non-ASEAN countries is not currently available for the ACCT unlike the TAC where external parties could accede, discussions on moving forward regarding this are anticipated to commence in 2019.

At least three non-ASEAN countries (Canada, France and the United Kingdom) have applied as observers in the working groups of the ADMM-Plus. Meanwhile, the Concept Paper on the Establishment of a DGICM+3 (China, Japan, Korea) mechanism is being reviewed by the ASEAN Member States.

As previously mentioned, a great number of defence and military exercises under the ambit of the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Groups are anticipated to be conducted in 2019 including a one-off ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise involving navies proposed to be conducted late in the year alongside the Southeast Asian Cooperation and Training (SEACAT), an annual exercise with regional navies and coastguards spearheaded by the US.

Challenging and interesting times as ASEAN moves into 2019. As ASEAN moves into and through 2019, challenging and interesting times it would be for the Association given the strategic competition between major powers, specifically the US and China, increasingly being felt both regionally and globally. It is anticipated that each (the US and China) utilising the various elements of their national power (from political to military to economic to socio-cultural) will intensify their efforts to be ahead of the other.

Amidst such geo-political, economic and technological context, ASEAN should position itself so much so that it remains to be the driving force both in regional mechanisms and in the regional political and security architecture. ASEAN's openness

and inclusivity, excluding no one has enabled the Association to bring together regional players, both big powers and developing countries.

ASEAN will have to proactively shape the discourse on regional issues, such as for example, discussions on Indo-Pacific, to ensure that the principles of openness and inclusivity remains to be the core bedrock of regional mechanisms. ASEAN has to continuously set the direction of regional cooperation. This is an imperative for ASEAN in order to realise the thrust for 2019 that no one (including ASEAN itself) is left behind as all move into the next decade of this century.

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