

Co-Chairs' Statement on the Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations

The Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in New Delhi, India on 16 June 2022, to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations in 2022 which has been designated as the ASEAN-India Friendship Year. H.E. Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore, and H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of the Republic of India, co-chaired the meeting.

Noting the millennia-old civilisational and cultural linkages between Southeast Asia and India, the Meeting recalled the milestones of the ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations over the last three decades and reaffirmed its commitment to further deepen this broad-based partnership to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Appreciating India's firm commitment to ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture, and in upholding key principles, shared values and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Meeting welcomed India's support for the ASEAN Community-building process, including through the support for the projects and initiatives under the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plans.

Acknowledging the importance of joint efforts to address the continuing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Meeting appreciated the mutual assistance extended by ASEAN Member States and India to each other.

Commending various activities held and planned to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations, the Meeting noted the unveiling of the 30th Anniversary Logo, the ASEAN-India High-Level Conference on Renewable Energy, the 7th edition of ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks(AINTT) and ASEAN-India Media Exchange.

Reviewing the past 30 years of Partnership, the Meeting agreed on the following:

- i. To further strengthen and deepen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership for mutual benefit, across the whole spectrum of political, security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation by utilizing relevant existing ASEAN-led mechanisms.
- ii. To reaffirm the commitment to multilateralism founded on the principles of the international law including the Charter of the United Nations, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other relevant UN treaties and conventions, maintain an open and inclusive regional cooperation framework, support ASEAN Centrality in the evolving rules-based regional architecture, uphold multilateralism in jointly responding to regional and global challenges.
- iii. To continue advancing the effective implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2021-2025).
- iv. To implement the decisions contained in the ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the AOIP for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the Region, adopted at the 18th ASEAN-India Summit in October 2021, and to explore potential cooperation between the AOIP and Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative (IPOI) initiated by India, in areas such as maritime cooperation, including maritime security, maritime connectivity, the Blue Economy, Disaster Risk Management, Search and Rescue (SAR) cooperation, marine environmental protection, and maritime safety.
- v. To enhance cooperation in narrowing the development gap through, among others, the implementation of IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025), alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development in order to strengthen the ASEAN Community and regional integration.
- vi. To achieve the full potential of ASEAN-India trade and economic partnership including through enhanced utilization and effective implementation of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (AIFTA) by the early commencement of the review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) to ensure that it is more user friendly, simple and trade facilitative for businesses, by accelerating the process of endorsement of the Scoping paper of

the review of AITIGA so that the AIFTA Joint Committee can be activated to oversee the implementation of the AITIGA Review.

vii. To strengthen regional connectivity, including both physical and digital, and explore synergies between the MPAC 2025 and India's connectivity initiatives under India's Act East Policy, in line with "Connecting the Connectivities" approach. The Meeting emphasised the need for the early completion and operationalisation of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and looked forward to its eastward extension to Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam, as well as supporting and collaborating with the ASEAN Smart Cities Network in building communities that are resilient, innovative and well-connected through technological advancement. It also emphasised the need for more robust air and maritime connectivity.

viii. To develop an open, secure, interoperable and user-empowering digital connectivity ecosystem, in view of the importance of digital platforms for improved access in areas such as healthcare, education, finance, etc. In this regard, the Meeting also agreed to strengthen ASEAN-India cooperation on cyber and related issues through the proposed G-2-G ASEAN-India Cyber Dialogue in addition to India's Track 1.5 Dialogue on Cyber Issues with ASEAN, being held since 2019.

ix. To enhance cooperation in the field of Defence through the ADMM-Plus and welcomed the proposed ASEAN-India Defence Ministers Informal Meeting in November 2022 and the proposed ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise. The Meeting also looked forward to the convening of the Field Training Exercise of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR in Indonesia in 2023. The Meeting also welcomed ASEAN-India cooperation in preventing and countering terrorism, the rise of radicalisation and violent extremism, and combating transnational crimes through the early finalization of the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)+ India Work Programme on Transnational Crime.

x. To address the inter-dependent challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss by deepening cooperation for sustainable management of natural resources and greater utilisation of renewable, clean and low-carbon energy, including offshore wind energy, green hydrogen, developing smart grid, etc. and working towards sustainable development, including in the maritime domain.

xi. To promote complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through cooperation with relevant ASEAN centres, institutions and mechanisms under the ASEAN Charter that facilitate sustainable development cooperation in the region.

xii. To strengthen cooperation in the fields of healthcare, agricultural research, fintech, and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the ASEAN-India Cooperation on Space Programme and agreed for a speedy conclusion of the ongoing projects. The Meeting also agreed to cooperate in vaccine production and distribution, research and innovation in generic medicines, cooperation on traditional medicines, strengthening public health infrastructure; and enhancing capacities for preparedness and response to the pandemic and public health emergencies and welcomed the proposed ASEAN-India cooperation in cancer care.

xiii. To deepen understanding and strengthen Inter-Parliamentary dialogue through greater ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and India parliamentary exchanges.

xiv. To continue enhancing people-to-people connectivity in socio-cultural fields including education, tourism, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), women empowerment, and youth exchange. The Meeting welcomed India's continued support of 1,000 PhD Fellowships for ASEAN students at Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), the IT Training Centres in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam including 'The ASEAN' Community Magazine and 'ASEAN Cultural Heritage List' Initiatives.

xv. To continue promoting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development and preparing them for digital transformation, including through enhancing capacity building particularly in the utilisation of digital economy, technical cooperation mechanisms and business matching activities as MSMEs constitute the backbone of the economies of ASEAN and India.

xvi. To explore potential synergies with sub-regional frameworks, such as, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-

Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), and Mekong sub-regional cooperation frameworks, including Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Ayeyawady Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), and to support ASEAN and India's efforts in promoting equitable development by aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive, mutual growth and development of ASEAN and India.

xvii. To work towards a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between ASEAN and India that is meaningful, substantive and mutually-beneficial by further enhancing ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership.
