



**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE
19TH ASEAN PLUS THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING
SINGAPORE, 4 AUGUST 2018**

1. The 19th ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Singapore on 4 August 2018. The Meeting was chaired by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

Review and Future Direction of ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation

2. The Ministers welcomed the substantive progress in APT cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen cooperation under the APT framework, which has played an important role in promoting peace, security, stability and prosperity in East Asia. They reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture and its various ASEAN-led mechanisms. They recognised the mutually reinforcing and complementary roles of the APT process with other regional fora such as the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum. They also shared the view that the APT should continue to support the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, to pave the way towards deeper regional integration in East Asia.

3. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the steady progress of work being undertaken under the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022, and looked forward to the timely and effective implementation of the Work Plan to enhance APT cooperation over the next five years. The Ministers also underscored the importance of the effective utilisation and prudent management of the APT Cooperation Fund to implement activities under the Work Plan and, in this regard, expressed appreciation to the APT countries which had contributed to the replenishment of the Fund to support the implementation of projects.

4. The Ministers recalled the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) II Report, including its recommendation to realise an East Asia Economic community (EAEC). They were pleased with the progress in the implementation of action plans of the EAVG II selected recommendations, which would pave the way towards greater APT integration. They looked forward to further progress on the outstanding action plans needed to implement the EAVG II recommendations.

5. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of the APT in maintaining and enhancing peace, security, stability and development in East Asia. They agreed to deepen political and security cooperation through dialogue and consultations, the strengthening of existing APT mechanisms, and active participation in relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms. They stressed the need to enhance efforts to address non-traditional security issues in the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022, such as trafficking in persons, cybercrimes, and illicit drug trafficking. They also looked forward to enhancing cooperation in maritime security and safety, countering terrorism and violent extremism and promoting moderation.

6. The Ministers welcomed the successful convening of the 7th Trilateral Summit between China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) held in May 2018 in Japan. The Ministers acknowledged the vital role of trilateral cooperation in enhancing mutual political trust, and boosting economic and socio-cultural cooperation in the region. The Ministers also noted the CJK+X idea explored by the Trilateral Summit to further enhance APT cooperation.

7. The Ministers welcomed the recent strengthening of global economic growth, supported by expansion in trade. They welcomed the growing trade between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries, and shared the importance of promoting trade liberalisation in the region and ensuring mutually beneficial partnerships. They reaffirmed their commitment to maintain a free, open and rules-based trading system that will support regional economic integration. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed recent progress in the negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and reiterated their resolve to work towards the swift and successful conclusion of a modern, comprehensive, high quality and mutually beneficial agreement.

8. The Ministers welcomed the efforts of the ASEAN-China Centre, ASEAN-Japan Centre and ASEAN-Korea Centre, as well as the East Asia Business Council (EABC) to promote the integration and development of micro, small and medium-sized

enterprises (MSMEs) in the region. They also recognised the potential presented by the ongoing digital revolution to improve the region's competitiveness and the livelihood of its people, while underscoring the need to prepare for its associated challenges. To this end, the Ministers appreciated relevant work to support the concrete application of technologies and smart solutions in our daily lives, such as through Information and Communications Technology (ICT), e-commerce and smart cities. They welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, expressed support for its progress made on developing a framework for smart city development in ASEAN as well as city-specific action plans, and looked forward to the Plus Three countries' close partnership with cities in the network as it evolves over the coming years.

9. The Ministers recognised the importance of strengthening APT financial cooperation to support economic growth in the region against the backdrop of a volatile global economic environment. They welcomed the continued commitment by APT Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to strengthen the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) through the first CMIM Periodic Review. The Ministers also welcomed the conclusion of the Memoranda of Understanding between the APT Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), between AMRO and the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), and between AMRO and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which will deepen AMRO's partnerships with global financial institutions. They further commended AMRO on becoming a Permanent Observer to the United Nations General Assembly, which will further broaden AMRO's engagement with other countries and international organisations.

10. The Ministers welcomed the completion of the ADB's study on promoting local currency-denominated green bonds for infrastructure development, the approval of the Credit Guarantee and Investment Facility's (CGIF) Medium-term Business Strategy and the Capital Increase Proposal (CIP), which increased the CGIF's authorised capital from USD 700 million to USD 1.2 billion, and the General Principles for participation of non-APT countries as observers in the APT Bond Market Forum. The Ministers also welcomed the agreement to establish a regional catastrophe risk insurance pool for Lao PDR and Myanmar as the first product of the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF), with support from Japan, Singapore and the World Bank. They also recognised that Cambodia may join the pool, subject to the result of feasibility studies. The Ministers acknowledged that SEADRIF, which will be domiciled in Singapore, aims to provide climate and disaster risk management insurance solutions to ASEAN Member States to narrow the natural catastrophe protection gap.

11. The Ministers underlined the importance of pursuing the nine strategic areas of cooperation under the APT Cooperation Strategy on Food, Agriculture and Forestry (APTCS) 2016-2025, along with knowledge sharing, technology transfer and investment promotion to further deepen regional collaboration. The Ministers underscored the relevant role of the APT Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) Agreement as a mechanism to strengthen regional food security. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the progress in finalising the Protocol to amend the APTERR Agreement to extend the annual contributions to the operational cost of APTERR for a further five-year period (2018-2022).

12. The Ministers were pleased to note the implementation of various initiatives of the APT Centre for the Gifted in Science (ACGS), including the successful conduct of the 11th ACGS Board of Directors Meeting from 22 to 25 November 2017, 9th APT Student Camp & Teacher Workshop from 5 to 12 January 2018 in the ROK, and the 7th APT Junior Odyssey from 29 July to 4 August 2018 in Malaysia.

13. The Ministers were pleased with the progress in the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and welcomed the establishment of the Lead Implementing Body for the MPAC 2025 Strategic Area on Sustainable Infrastructure (LIB-SI). They looked forward to the continued support of APT countries for the implementation of MPAC 2025, particularly in the development of sustainable and quality infrastructure in accordance with international standards. They underscored the importance of exploring links and synergies between MPAC 2025 and the Plus Three countries' connectivity strategies.

14. The Ministers acknowledged the efforts to implement the priority areas of collaboration identified in the Joint Statement of the 7th APT Health Ministers Meeting on 7 September 2017 in Brunei Darussalam. These include Universal Health Coverage (UHC), utilising ICT for healthcare, non-communicable diseases, traditional and complementary medicine, active ageing, human resources for health, responding to communicable and emerging health threats and food safety, as well as issues related to antimicrobial resistance, ending all forms of malnutrition, and disaster health management. The Ministers looked forward to the adoption of the APT Leaders' Statement on Cooperation against Antimicrobial Resistance at the 21st APT Summit in November 2018. The Ministers noted Japan's suggestion to expand the target areas under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN).

15. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to promote sustainable development, and to protect and conserve the environment. In this regard, the

Ministers called for the development of collaborative projects to protect and conserve the environment, promote sustainable use of natural resources, address the impact of climate change and forge closer cooperation on poverty alleviation. The Ministers recognised that marine debris pollution is increasingly becoming a global concern, and that collective and coordinated actions among APT countries are urgently needed because of the transboundary nature of this issue. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to advancing complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to improve the living standards of the people in the APT countries. The Ministers encouraged enhanced cooperation to support equitable development and narrowing the development gap in ASEAN, including through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI).

16. The Ministers expressed support for Singapore's designation of 2018 as the Year of Climate Action. They welcomed Singapore's successful convening of the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Climate Action (SAMCA) and the Expanded SAMCA on 10 July 2018 in its capacity as ASEAN Chair, where ASEAN and the Plus Three countries engaged one another on their climate action plans, reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement and discussed ways to increase regional action to address climate change. They also noted the ASEAN-Japan Climate Change Action Agenda proposed by Japan at the Expanded SAMCA. The Ministers also welcomed the ASEAN Climate Change Partnership Conference held on 26 June 2018 in the Philippines, to promote multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing climate change among ASEAN Member States, relevant sectoral bodies, and Dialogue Partners.

17. The Ministers commended the efforts of the APT Meeting on Youth to engage youth in APT countries and establish effective communication through various annual youth exchanges and community immersions. The Ministers also noted the development of the APT Plan of Action on Education 2018-2025, which was endorsed by the 8th APT Senior Officials Meeting on Education in December 2017.

18. The Ministers noted the convening of the Seminar on Migrant Workers' Contribution to an East Asia Economic Community in April 2018 in Cambodia, which produced key recommendations to address the challenges faced by migrant workers in East Asia. The Ministers looked forward to the Conference on Sharing Best Practices on Harnessing Industry Involvement in Development of Higher Level Qualifications to be held in October 2018 in the Philippines, as part of the implementation of the EAVG II recommendations. The Ministers also underscored the importance of continued cooperation on various aspects relating to labour including emerging issues associated with the Future of Work and green jobs.

19. The Ministers noted the progress in the implementation of the APT Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM+3) Work Plan 2016-2020, which covers areas of mutual interest including e-governance, human resource management, human resource development, public sector productivity, good governance, public sector reform, local administration capacity building and cooperation, and research and innovation. The Ministers welcomed the initiatives supported by the APT Cooperation Fund that sought to strengthen the overall capabilities of the ASEAN Civil Services. The Ministers looked forward to the successful convening of the Heads of Civil Service Meeting for the 4th ACCSM+3 on 25 October 2018 in Singapore.

20. The Ministers appreciated the efforts undertaken in the Work Plan on Enhancing APT Cooperation on Culture 2013-2017, which saw the successful implementation of the 11th APT Workshop on Cultural Human Resource Development from 15 to 25 November 2017 in China, and the Workshop on Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage Sites from 22 to 27 October 2017 in Myanmar. They looked forward to the new Work Plan for 2019-2021 to enhance inter-cultural exchanges and understanding. Under the information sector, the Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Work Plan on Enhancing APT Cooperation through Information and Media 2018-2023 which outlined future cooperation in the areas of human resource development, media networking and new media during the 5th Conference of APT Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI+3) on 10 May 2018 in Singapore.

21. The Ministers acknowledged the important contributions of the East Asia Forum (EAF) to further deepen Track 1.5 cooperation in East Asia. In this regard, they looked forward to the convening of the 16th EAF which would be co-hosted by Lao PDR and the ROK from 29 to 30 August 2018 in Lao PDR. The Ministers also recognised the role of the Network of East Asia Think-Tanks (NEAT) in promoting APT cooperation and welcomed the outcomes of the 28th NEAT Country Coordinators Meeting from 8 to 9 May 2018 in Myanmar, the NEAT Working Group Meeting on “Mapping a Blueprint for East Asia Economic Community” on 10 July 2018 in China, the NEAT Working Group Meeting on “East Asian Socio-Cultural Connectivity: Building an Institutional Network” from 19 to 21 July 2018 in the ROK, and the NEAT Working Group Meeting on “Enhancing the East Asian Food Security Mechanism: APTERR’s contribution to Food Security and Disaster Prevention” on 27 July 2018 in Japan. The Ministers also looked forward to the NEAT Working Group Meeting on “Mainstreaming Disability in East Asia Economic community: Breaking barriers and creating inclusive society through mutual collaboration” to be held from 15 to 17 August 2018 in Thailand.

22. The Ministers acknowledged the successful completion of the 13th Annual Meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Training Institutions of APT countries held from 23 to 25 May 2018 in China with the theme “Innovation in Diplomatic Training: New Challenges, New Methods, New Modes”. They welcomed the agreement of this Meeting to hold a joint training course on “Crisis Management” in 2019 at the same venue and time of the 14th Annual Meeting for APT Young Diplomats that will build knowledge and enhance cooperation through the sharing of best practices.

23. The Ministers also underscored the importance of strengthening cross-pillar cooperation in other areas such as tourism, energy security, minerals, disaster management and emergency response, ending all forms of malnutrition, active ageing, social welfare and women empowerment.

Regional and International Issues

24. The Ministers welcomed the Inter-Korean Summits held on 27 April 2018 and 26 May 2018, as well as the Singapore Summit between the United States (US) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 12 June 2018. They also welcomed the Panmunjom Declaration signed between President Moon Jae-in of the ROK and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK Kim Jong Un, as well as the Joint Statement signed between US President Donald J Trump and Chairman Kim.

25. The Ministers urged all concerned parties to continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace and stability on a denuclearised Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration and the Joint Statement by the US and DPRK leaders. They also welcomed the DPRK’s stated commitment to complete denuclearisation and its pledge to refrain from further nuclear and missile tests during this period. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula which will contribute to peace and stability in the region. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the resolution of the abductions issue.

Other Matters

26. The Ministers discussed the preparations for the 21st APT Summit to be held on 14 November 2018 in Singapore. The Ministers reiterated their support for the adoption of the APT Leaders' Statement on Cooperation Against Antimicrobial Resistance as an outcome document of the 21st APT Summit.

27. The Ministers looked forward to the convening of the 20th APT Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Thailand in 2019.

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