

31st ASEAN-Australia Forum Co-Chairs' Summary

1. The 31st ASEAN-Australia Forum was held in Putrajaya on 2-3 May 2019, with the participation of representatives from ASEAN Member States (AMS), Australia and the ASEAN Secretariat.
2. The Forum was co-chaired by H.E. Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram bin Yaakob, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia and Richard Maude, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. Australia thanked Malaysia for its work as the new Country Coordinator for ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations for 2018-2021 and expressed its support for Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" in 2019.
3. The Forum recognised that 2019 marked 45 years since Australia became an official Dialogue Partner of ASEAN. Australia and AMS acknowledged that this long-standing partnership continued to be at a high point after the 2018 ASEAN-Australia Special Summit and the 2018 Informal Breakfast Summit. Both sides welcomed the ongoing efforts to implement the initiatives announced at these two leaders' meetings and reaffirmed their commitment to intensify shared work to shape a secure and prosperous region for all people.
4. The Forum looked forward to agreeing to an ambitious and targeted ASEAN-Australia Plan of Action for 2020-2024, to be endorsed by Foreign Ministers this year. The document would reflect our complementary visions for the region. The Forum noted ASEAN and Australian Leaders' commitment to continue political dialogue under the Strategic Partnership. Australia was pleased to welcome a visit by the Secretary-General of ASEAN in February 2019 and looked forward to continued high-level engagement in the future.
5. The Forum discussed the concept of the Indo-Pacific and Australia welcomed ASEAN's ongoing efforts to shape its own outlook for the Indo-Pacific. Australia emphasised ASEAN's place at the heart of the Indo-Pacific and ASEAN's important role in ensuring an open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based regional order where international law and the rights of all States are respected. ASEAN and Australia further stressed the importance of working together to reinforce the rules and norms that underpin our peace, stability, prosperity and sustainability. Australia reiterated its commitment to ASEAN centrality.
6. The Forum also discussed the importance of ASEAN-led mechanisms in addressing regional challenges and ways to enhance ASEAN-Australia cooperation at the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF). Both sides expressed their

commitment to continue to strengthen the EAS as the region's premier leader-led strategic forum.

7. The Forum reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, and freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. The Forum further emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may complicate the situation. The Forum reaffirmed the need for states to pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and to comply with the relevant standards and recommended practices by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In this regard, the Forum supported full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and looked forward to an early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). Australia expressed its expectation that the COC would be consistent with international law, including UNCLOS.
8. The Forum reaffirmed support for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Both sides welcomed the efforts of relevant countries to engage in dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as well as the DPRK's stated commitment to complete denuclearisation and pledge to refrain from further nuclear and missile tests. The Forum reiterated its commitment to the full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.
9. The Forum discussed the situation in Rakhine State and welcomed ASEAN's role, including the work of the AHA Centre, in assisting the Myanmar Government to deliver humanitarian assistance to all communities in Rakhine State and the preliminary needs assessment conducted by the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) in Myanmar from 4 to 13 March 2019. The Forum expressed its readiness to support the repatriation process and welcomed Myanmar's commitment to ensuring the safety and security for all communities in Rakhine State as effectively as possible and to facilitating the return of displaced persons to Myanmar in a safe, voluntary and dignified manner. We also expressed our continued support for Myanmar in its efforts to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, to promote harmony and inter-communal cohesion and enhanced sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.
10. Australia reaffirmed its commitment to working with AMS to counter terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations through the 2018 ASEAN-Australia Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation to Counter International Terrorism and its package of initiatives, including to support development of best

practice counter terrorism legislation, and regional dialogues and workshops on topics such as electronic evidence, financial intelligence, and countering online radicalisation. The Forum discussed the need to prevent and suppress the flow of foreign terrorist fighters in the region.

11. The Forum welcomed the new ASEAN-Australian Counter Trafficking program, which builds on Australia's 15-year history of promoting safe, orderly and regular migration in the region, supporting improved criminal justice responses in ASEAN, and the timely and meaningful implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). The Forum discussed Australia's long-standing cooperation on law enforcement, customs and immigration to counter transnational crime. The Forum also recognised the importance of promoting and protecting human rights in the region and welcomed Australia's ongoing engagement with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.
12. ASEAN recognised Australia's continued support to narrow the development gap within AMS including through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III. The Forum welcomed Australia's commitment to promote a more secure, resilient, open and prosperous Mekong region, including through its new phase of the Greater Mekong Water Resources Program.
13. Australia and ASEAN welcomed the success of the inaugural ASEAN-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue in September 2018, as well as the ongoing cooperation supported by the Australian Cyber Cooperation Program and looked forward to the next dialogue in 2020. Both sides welcomed the progress made on the ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards Initiative, which will provide a framework to support the development, adoption and use of international digital trade standards.
14. The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to resist protectionism and maintain free and open markets, which facilitate flows of goods, investment, services and capital. Both sides agreed that the stable economic growth we enjoy in our region depends on a healthy, open, rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its centre. Both sides committed to engage constructively in WTO reform discussions to improve its functioning. The Forum recognised the benefits of economic integration that is inclusive of, and open to, all the region's economies.
15. The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to the conclusion of a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in 2019. The Forum also reflected on the success of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) in boosting economic ties and supporting ASEAN's regional economic integration, and looked forward to the implementation of the recommendations of the AANZFTA General Review. Australia and ASEAN underlined their commitment to regional economic architecture that is inclusive.

16. The Forum discussed the role of quality, sustainable and transparent infrastructure development in improving economic growth, sustainable development, and integration in our region. AMS welcomed Australia's ongoing support for ASEAN's connectivity agenda including through implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, the ASEAN-Australia Infrastructure Cooperation Initiative and the ASEAN-Australia Smart and Sustainable Cities initiative. The Forum welcomed Australia's new Southeast Asia Economic Governance and Infrastructure Initiative, announced at the 2018 Informal Breakfast Summit, which will increase Australia and AMS collaboration on economic reform and infrastructure development.

17. The Forum discussed Australia's efforts to strengthen people-to-people links with ASEAN, including through its flagship '*Australia now*' public diplomacy program and its focus on youth and fostering mutual understanding. The Forum also recognised Australia's dedicated New Colombo Plan and Australia Awards scholarships, and continuation of other highly successful education, sport, arts and cultural exchange programs, including the activities of the ASEAN-Australia Council.