



## **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> EAST ASIA SUMMIT (EAS) FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

VIENTIANE, LAO PDR  
27 July 2024

1. The 14<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting was convened on 27 July 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Meeting was chaired by His Excellency Saleumxay KOMMASITH, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR.

### **Review and Future Direction of the EAS**

2. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to further strengthening the EAS as the premier Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity in East Asia in line with the EAS fundamental documents and based on the established principles, objectives and modalities of the EAS.
3. The Meeting reaffirmed that the EAS continues to be an open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking forum that is an integral component of the evolving rules-based ASEAN-centred regional architecture anchored in international law, under the guiding principles of the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration, the 2011 EAS Declaration on the Principles of Mutually Beneficial Relations, and reaffirmed in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's central role in the EAS and underscored ASEAN's commitment to work in close partnership with all participating countries in the EAS, consistent with the principles of the AOIP. The Meeting emphasised the important role of the EAS in strengthening multilateralism and the international order based on international law. The Meeting also underscored the need to promote an enabling environment for peace, stability and prosperous development in an inclusive manner, through ensuring a culture of dialogue and cooperation instead of rivalry, enhancing mutual trust and confidence, and respect for international law.
4. The Meeting underscored the need to further strengthen the EAS to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness amidst the rapidly changing regional and global landscape. In this regard, the Meeting recognised the continued importance of constructive dialogue on strategic issues among leaders in the EAS in order to reinforce strategic trust and address common challenges based on mutual trust, benefit, and respect. The Meeting emphasised the importance of continued cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms to promote communication and

dialogue and confidence building and preventive measures to enhance mutual trust and confidence among countries in the region.

5. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of increasing strategic coordination between the EAS and other ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ARF and the ADMM-Plus, including through the submission of reports and information-sharing by the ASEAN Chair, where deemed necessary, for the EAS' information.
6. The Meeting welcomed the continued efforts to strengthen the EAS, including through, among others, the regular engagement between the CPR and the non-ASEAN Ambassador of EAS Participating Countries in Jakarta and encouraged their continuation as the Group of the East Asia Summit Participating Countries' Ambassadors to ASEAN in Jakarta to discuss the implementation of the EAS Leaders' decisions, and exchange information on regional development cooperation initiatives and security policies and initiatives, and discuss the evolving regional architecture with the support of the EAS Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat.

### **Areas of Cooperation**

7. The Meeting welcomed the progress made under the new EAS Plan of Action (2024-2028) adopted on 14 July 2023 in Jakarta, particularly under the areas of Climate, Environment, Energy, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Cooperation on Natural Disaster Management, ASEAN Connectivity, and Maritime Cooperation. The Meeting highlighted that the Plan of Action would continue to serve as the principal guide to enhance EAS cooperation over the next five years, with the aim to increase the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of the EAS as a Leaders-led forum for promoting peace, stability, and economic prosperity in the region.
8. The Meeting expressed support for the principles of the AOIP and ASEAN's efforts in mainstreaming and implementing the AOIP. The Meeting supported efforts to advance the AOIP's four priority areas, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030, and economic and other possible areas of cooperation, including through mainstreaming the four priority areas within ASEAN-led mechanisms, building on the 2023 EAS Leaders' Statement on Maintaining and Promoting the Region as an Epicentrum of Growth and the EAS Plan of Action (2024-2028) and other relevant EAS Leaders' Statements.

### *Peace and Security*

9. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, was demonstrated through the adoption of key regional frameworks by ASEAN, and the convening of consultative platforms and established mechanisms in advancing WPS that involves EAS participating countries. The Meeting recalled the adoption of the EAS Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security in 2020 and called for EAS participating countries to undertake more activities to implement the Leaders' commitments.
10. The Meeting emphasised the growing importance of security in the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and reaffirmed the need to enhance cooperation to promote an open, secure, reliable, interoperable, stable,

accessible and peaceful-ICT environment, including through capacity building measures. In this connection, the Meeting encouraged the EAS participating countries to further enhance cooperation in this area based on the guidance provided by the 2015 EAS Leaders' Statement on Issues Related to Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies and the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on Deepening Cooperation in the Security of Information and Communications Technologies and of the Digital Economy.

11. The Meeting acknowledged that discussions on traditional and non-traditional security issues, including transnational crime, cybercrime and human trafficking related to cybercrimes, and reaffirmed their commitment to implement the relevant EAS Leaders' Statements and Declarations, including the 2020 EAS Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security; the 2019 EAS Leaders' Statement on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime; the 2019 EAS Leaders' Statement on Combating the Spread of Illicit Drugs; the 2018 EAS Leaders' Statement on the Safe and Security Use, Storage, and Transport of Nuclear and Other Radioactive Materials; the 2017 EAS Leaders' Statement on Chemical Weapons; the 2017 EAS Leaders' Declaration on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism; and the 2016 EAS Statement on Non-Proliferation.

#### *Sustainable Development*

12. The Meeting noted several initiatives that are being developed under the ambit of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) relevant to sustainable development, with the involvement of different key stakeholders, including EAS participating countries. These initiatives include the High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue (HLBD) on Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the ASEAN Forum on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with National Development Planning Agencies; and the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Accelerating Actions to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### *Climate, Environment and Energy Cooperation*

13. The Meeting welcomed the virtual convening of the 13<sup>th</sup> EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities (HLS-SC) on 1 March 2023. The theme of the Seminar was closely linked to the ASEAN SDG's Frontrunners Cities Phase 2 initiative, demonstrating steady progress of actions of ASEAN cities towards achieving sustainable development, particularly on the initiatives related to combatting marine debris and strengthening climate resilience in the region.
14. The Meeting recognised the importance of a sustainable recovery that supports both economic growth and climate and sustainability goals, as well as the efforts by EAS participating countries to implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities, in light of different national circumstances. The Meeting discussed ways and means to address the impacts of climate change, including through the adoption of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, sharing of

best practices, and providing resources and technical expertise for regional initiatives, including the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change. The Meeting also appreciated activities of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in supporting EAS countries to achieve realistic energy transition pathways towards carbon neutrality.

15. The Meeting encouraged EAS participating countries to strengthen cooperation on addressing air pollution, particularly on the impact of climate change, sustainable cities, marine pollution and conservation, and a one-health approach related to environmental health matters. The Meeting took note of the need to address transboundary haze pollution and also encouraged EAS participating countries to support the establishment and operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACCTHPC) for the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP), in collaboration with other relevant ASEAN centres such as the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre.
16. The Meeting took note of the progress made under the EAS Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Recovery, which was adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in October 2021, particularly the importance of a sustainable recovery that is comprehensive, inclusive and resilient; the need to promote economic policies and growth including trade and investment, that contribute to sustainable development; and the need to tackle climate change, as well as address other economic, social, and environmental challenges.
17. The Meeting welcomed the fruitful outcomes of the 17<sup>th</sup> EAS Energy Ministers' Meeting (EAS EMM) on 25 August 2023 in conjunction with the 41<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM) and Associated Meetings. The Meeting reaffirmed the need to explore concrete cooperation initiatives to enhance the region's energy interconnectivity, including through the implementation of the ASEAN Power Grid, and support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC). The Meeting looked forward to tangible initiatives regarding energy efficiency and conservation, net zero emissions and low-carbon energy technologies, hydrogen and ammonia fuels, among others. In this regard, the Meeting took note of activities under the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) platform that contribute to APAEC and accelerate energy transitions in the region through various pathways. The Meeting took note of India's proposal to host EAS Workshop on Energy Efficiency Policies and Programs – Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE).

#### *Education Cooperation*

18. The Meeting encouraged long-term and mutually beneficial education cooperation among the EAS participating countries particularly, in enhancing youth and people to people exchanges through scholarship programs, life-long skills and digital literacy development. The Meeting recognised that the EAS education cooperation has been pursued in line with priority areas under the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025. The Ministers commended the implementation of inclusive and quality education programmes and activities by EAS participating countries, especially in the areas of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), higher education, and research, people-to-people exchanges including through

scholarship programmes, EAS TVET Cooperation Network, strengthening competency of teachers in information and communications technologies (ICT) integrated with new practical skills, and promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and mental health and well-being of students. The Meeting supported the priorities of the ASEAN TVET Council (ATC) to advance TVET in the region through the implementation of its Work Plan 2021-2030. The Meeting welcomed the inauguration of the new campus of the Nalanda University, an EAS initiative, in June 2024.

19. The meeting called for greater efforts to explore more initiatives for cooperation between ASEAN and EAS participating countries in sport, cultural and arts, drawing on the rich cultural diversity and heritage of ASEAN as an engine for economic growth and sustainable development, and for forging closer friendship and understanding between ASEAN and EAS participating countries.

#### *Finance*

20. The Meeting reiterated the need to work together to strengthen the global economic recovery. The EAS participating countries expressed support for the further strengthening of the region's resilience to external shocks through exchanging views on macroeconomic and financial developments.

#### *Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases*

21. The Meeting recognised the importance of mental health as a critical public health issue which has been neglected and further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and called for greater cooperation in mental health. The Meeting noted the progress made in the preparations for the 2<sup>nd</sup> EAS Workshop on Mental Health Cooperation scheduled for August 2024 to implement the EAS Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation, adopted at the 16<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in October 2021, under the joint leadership of Brunei Darussalam and Australia.
22. The Meeting acknowledged the significance of Strengthening Collective Capacity in Epidemics Prevention and Response on the basis of the relevant EAS Leaders' Statement adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS (14 November 2020), under the joint leadership of Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Russia and China, which recognizes the unprecedented and severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adopt an effective and comprehensive response to promote the health, well-being, livelihoods, and safety of our peoples and mitigate the adverse impacts on the socio-economic and socio-cultural development of EAS participating countries. The Meeting recognised that the EAS participating countries are in the process of consideration of the proposal of Russia to establish a 'Regional Mechanism of Emerging Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control among EAS participating countries' to realise the decisions of the EAS Leaders and to further advance cooperation in this area, building on the progress achieved at the meeting of the heads of agencies of the EAS participating countries, responsible for the control of infectious diseases on 16-17 October 2019, which was initiated by Thailand and Russia, as well as at the EAS Health Experts Meeting on 14 October 2020 cosponsored by Vietnam, Indonesia, Russia and China.

*Cooperation on Natural Disaster Management*

23. The Meeting reiterated a commitment to continuously support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and the current AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025. The Meeting reaffirmed support to enhance the implementation of the “ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region” to increase the speed, scale, and solidarity of ASEAN’s response, and the strengthening of the capacity of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) as the primary ASEAN regional coordinating agency on disaster management and emergency response. The Meeting also encouraged the EAS participating countries to forge stronger collaboration to support ASEAN towards becoming a global leader in disaster management in line with the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management as well as strengthening climate and disaster resilience for sustainable development in accordance with the ASEAN Leaders’ Declaration on Sustainable Resilience.
24. The Meeting commended ASEAN’s commitment to strengthen resilience in light of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Indian Ocean Tsunami and expressed strong support to further strengthen ASEAN’s mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery capacity from tsunami and other mega-disasters. The EAS participating countries looked forward to engaging, as appropriate, in the series of commemorative events by ASEAN. The Meeting emphasised the importance of further strengthening engagements between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) of non-ASEAN EAS participating countries, through active participation in ASEAN-led activities and practical joint collaborations. The Meeting also encouraged the EAS participating countries to continue promoting cooperation in disaster management including through the realisation of the 2014 EAS Statement on Rapid Disaster Response to respond effectively to disasters in the region while respecting ASEAN Centrality.

*Cooperation on ASEAN Connectivity*

25. The Meeting acknowledged the emphasis on ASEAN Connectivity this year under Lao PDR’s ASEAN Chairmanship theme of “ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience” and looked forward to further enhancing cooperation with non-ASEAN EAS participating countries in implementing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and its successor document, contributing towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient ASEAN Community. The Meeting encouraged the development and implementation of more tangible connectivity projects to support regional connectivity and advance the ASEAN Connectivity agenda.
26. The Meeting further reaffirmed the importance of promoting greater synergies among the various connectivity initiatives within and beyond the region. The Meeting appreciated the support of the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries for the implementation of the MPAC 2025 and emphasised the need for continued engagement between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the non-ASEAN EAS participating countries through the annual ACCC Consultation with Dialogue Partners and Other External Partners and the annual

ASEAN Connectivity Symposium. In this regard, the Meeting looked forward to the participation of non-ASEAN EAS participating countries in the upcoming 15<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium which will be held in August 2024 in Lao PDR.

#### *Economic Cooperation and Trade*

27. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, to implementing the outcomes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conferences and to working towards necessary reform of the WTO to improve all its functions. The Meeting reiterated the importance of strengthening economic relations among the EAS participating countries with ASEAN playing a central role. In this regard, the Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing economic cooperation among EAS participating countries in the areas of mutual interest, such as digitalisation, green economy, and supply chain resilience and connectivity, among others, to ensure regional resilience against future economic shocks and narrow the development gap in the region. The Meeting also underscored the importance of promoting circular economy approaches to unlock future growth in a more sustainable way and support transitions to sustainable growth in the region.

#### *Poverty Alleviation*

28. The Meeting commended the work of the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) in advancing cooperation which aims to eradicate poverty through, among others, the annual convening of the ASEAN Public-Private-People Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. The Forum serves as an avenue for dialogue and sharing of information between ASEAN and its key stakeholders, including the EAS participating countries, towards closer relations and cooperation on shared rural and poverty eradication agenda.

29. The Meeting recognised the importance of advancing social protection agenda in the EAS and beyond. The Meeting recognised further that for social protection to have greater impact on the lives of the people, it must be adaptive to different risks and vulnerabilities faced by the changes in the economy and labour markets and impacts of climate change, disaster and economic crises across EAS participating countries, with comprehensive and meaningful involvement of governments, the private sector, development partners, civil society, service providers, as well as community volunteers.

30. The Meeting welcomed opportunities for sharing of good practices on strengthening social protection systems, especially those that address the needs of the most vulnerable sectors, in support of the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection and its Regional Action Plan and the ASEAN Guidelines on Disaster Responsive Social Protection

#### *Food Security*

31. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to implement the 2013 EAS Declaration on Food Security and stressed the need to further enhance food and nutrition security through the implementation of the new ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS)

Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (SPA-FS) 2021-2025. The Meeting expressed support to the Development of the ASEAN Action Plan on the implementation of the ASEAN Guidelines on Sustainable Agriculture and the implementation of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition in Response to Crises which was adopted in 2023 to take practical and concrete measures in strengthening local, regional and global food supply chains and logistics systems to ensure regional and global food security and nutrition.

### *Maritime Cooperation*

32. The Meeting expressed support for the strengthening of maritime cooperation among the EAS participating countries in accordance with the 2020 EAS Leaders' Statement on Marine Sustainability, the 2023 EAS Leaders' Statement on Maintaining and Promoting the Region as an Epicentrum of Growth, and international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the 2015 EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation by promoting the sustainable use and management of marine resources and protection and conservation of marine environment, biodiversity, and ecosystems, and by addressing and combating the adverse impacts of pollution, ocean acidification, marine debris, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, piracies, and armed robberies against ships. At the same time, the Meeting emphasised the need to enhance complementarity with other ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), with a view to avoiding duplication.
33. The Meeting recognised the need to maintain and further strengthen stability in the maritime sphere in the region. The Meeting also underlined the importance of strengthening maritime cooperation and exploring new initiatives towards this end. The Meeting took into account the cross-cutting nature of maritime cooperation through such activities such as the ASEAN Indo-Pacific Workshop on Marine Plastic Debris, co-hosted by Indonesia and New Zealand in Bali, 14-15 June 2023 and the EAS Workshop on Developing Coastal Economy held in Bali, 4-5 August 2023. The Meeting also welcomed the successful hosting of the 6<sup>th</sup> EAS Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation by India in Mumbai, 4-5 July 2024, co-chaired by India, Indonesia and Australia.

### *Tourism Cooperation*

34. As the tourism sector is one of the main contributors to economic growth, employment, social benefits and livelihoods of local communities, the Meeting commended the relentless efforts by this sector in implementing timely and innovative measures as guided by the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism and the updated ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) 2016-2025. In this regard, the Meeting encouraged all EAS participating countries to implement the EAS Leaders' Statement on Economic Growth through Tourism Recovery which was adopted under the joint leadership of Thailand, Russia and India at the 16<sup>th</sup> EAS on 27 October 2021, through the existing ASEAN tourism mechanisms with the Plus Ones and the Plus Three countries in line with the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism. The Meeting also supported the development



of an Action Plan to implement the ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in the post COVID-19 Era. The Meeting recognised that the EAS participating countries are in the process of consideration of the proposal regarding the possibility of holding dialogue on tourism among relevant agencies of the EAS participating countries.

#### *Advancement and Empowerment of Women and Youth Participation*

35. The Meeting expressed support for strengthening cooperation towards the advancement and empowerment of women and youth participation in the region, through the ambit of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), and the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Youth (SOMY). Numerous regional initiatives in advancing gender equality have been finalised and implemented, involving key stakeholders, including the EAS participating countries.
36. The Meeting emphasised the importance of promoting regional cooperation in articulating and advocating for women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship as a key driver of an inclusive and sustainable growth in the region. The Meeting further highlighted the indispensable contribution of care work to sustainable development, social cohesion, and crucially, gender equality and women's empowerment which is increasingly shaping the cooperation and dialogue between ASEAN and EAS participating countries.
37. The Meeting recognised child online protection as an urgent agenda that affects the region. The Meeting commended the initiative of the Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) in safeguarding the rights of children in the digital space through convening the annual ASEAN ICT Forum with wider participation of the private sector from the IT and Communication industries. The Meeting expressed support in further accelerating the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse (ASEAN RPA on COEA) through collaboration on common agenda, including knowledge exchange and shared advocacy on child protection online.
38. The Meeting expressed concern about child labour across the region. The Meeting expressed support for preventing and eliminating the worst forms of child labour guided by the ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025. The Meeting looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour during the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits spearheaded by the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM).
39. The Meeting expressed commitment to advancing gender equality and social inclusion through robust joint efforts in operationalising the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (AGMSF) and the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the three ASEAN Community pillars ensuring gender, disability, and social inclusion rights

are integral in the ongoing and future collaborative initiatives among EAS participating countries.

#### *Strengthening EAS Institutional Capacity*

40. The Meeting acknowledged the exchange of information on regional development cooperation and security initiatives as an important agenda of the regular engagement between the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the non-ASEAN Ambassadors of EAS Participating Countries in Jakarta. Discussion of the regional security architecture has also been undertaken by the EAS Group, with optional participation of representatives from the capitals of EAS participating countries. The prevailing geopolitical dynamics make it imperative that the EAS platform is fully utilised as it was envisioned, a platform for dialogue on broad strategic, political, and economic issues, with ASEAN as the driving force.

### **Regional and International Issues**

#### *Developments in the Korean Peninsula*

41. The Meeting expressed concern over the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula and stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. Many Ministers expressed grave concern over the recent surge in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) intercontinental ballistic missile testing and ballistic missile launches and the increased tension in the Korean Peninsula, which are a worrisome development that threatens peace and stability in the region. Many Ministers called on the DPRK to comply fully with all relevant UNSC Resolutions and called for peaceful dialogue among the concerned parties, and continue working towards the realisation of lasting peace, and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. Many Ministers called for the full implementation of all relevant UNSC Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. Diplomatic efforts, including the creation of a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties should remain a priority. The Meeting reiterated our readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms such as the ARF in promoting a conducive atmosphere for peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties. Some Ministers also emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions and detainees issues.

#### *Developments in the South China Sea*

42. The Meeting discussed the situation in the South China Sea, during which concerns were expressed by some Ministers, on the land reclamations, activities in the area, including actions that put the safety of all persons at risk, which have eroded trust and confidence, increased tensions, and may undermine peace, security, and stability in the region. The Meeting reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability, and avoid

actions that may further complicate the situation. The Meeting further reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. The Meeting emphasised the importance of self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea.

43. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and recognised the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, and prosperity. The Meeting underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety. The Meeting was pleased with the progress achieved so far in the ongoing negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), notably the commencement of the third reading of the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text (SDNT) and encouraged continued positive momentum in this regard. The Meeting looked forward to the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

#### *Developments in Myanmar*

44. The Meeting discussed the developments in Myanmar during which deep concern were expressed over the escalation of conflicts and humanitarian situation. The Meeting reaffirmed support for the ASEAN Leaders' Five-Point Consensus (5PC) which remains the main reference to address the political crisis in Myanmar. The Meeting also reaffirmed the relevant Leaders' decisions. The Meeting condemned the continued acts of violence against civilians and public facilities and called for immediate cessation. The Meeting urged all parties involved to take concrete action to immediately halt indiscriminate violence, denounce any escalation, exercise utmost restraint, ensure the protection and safety of all civilians and create a conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and inclusive national dialogue.
45. The Meeting welcomed the progress of the provision of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance under Phase 1 (Life-Saving/COVID-19 response) and Phase 2 (Life-Sustaining) by the AHA Centre in coordination with Myanmar to implement Point 4 of the ASEAN Leaders' 5PC. The Meeting noted that as of 10 July 2024, the total distributed value under the Phase 2 response is around USD 1.88 million through the provision of food (rice and food packages composed of rice, pulses, oil, salt) and non-food items (family kits and personal hygiene kits) reaching the affected populations in Sagaing Region, Magway Region, southern Shan State and Mon State. In this regard, the Meeting commended the AHA Centre for its continuous efforts in delivering ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar, and welcomed Thailand's humanitarian initiative, which are in line with the 5PC and coordinated with the ASEAN Chair through the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar. The Meeting appreciated the contributions by ASEAN Member States, external partners, and the private sector, and called for all relevant parties in Myanmar to ensure the safe and transparent delivery of humanitarian assistance, to the people in Myanmar without discrimination, towards the more effective implementation of Point 4 of the 5PC. The Meeting called for scaled-up additional financial support

from the international community for humanitarian assistance, including to ensure the safety and livelihood of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

46. The Meeting commended the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar for efforts made to promote progress in the implementation of the 5PC in its entirety. The Meeting welcomed his efforts to continue reaching out to parties concerned in a sustainable manner, and to help the people of Myanmar to achieve an inclusive and durable peaceful resolution that is Myanmar-owned and -led for peace, security and stability in the region.

#### *Situation in Ukraine*

47. With regard to Ukraine, as for all nations, the Meeting continued to reaffirm our respect for sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity. The Meeting reiterated our call for compliance with the UN Charter and international law. The Meeting underlined the importance of reaching a just and lasting peace based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in all their entirety and an immediate cessation of hostilities and the creation of enabling environment for peaceful resolution. The Meeting supported the efforts of the UN Secretary-General in the search for peaceful solution. The Meeting also called for the facilitation of rapid, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those in need, and for the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel, and persons in vulnerable situations. Some Ministers also took note of views expressed on the recent developments and the need to address the root causes.

#### *Developments in the Middle East*

48. The Meeting expressed grave concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has been exacerbated following the 7 October attacks. The Meeting condemned all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, which have resulted in the alarming number of casualties, particularly women and children, and deterioration of the humanitarian crisis, and called for more to be done to facilitate access to food, water, and other basic needs in Gaza. The Meeting urged all relevant parties to accept the ceasefire proposal as outlined in paragraph 2 of UN Security Council Resolution 2735. The Meeting called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, including 23 ASEAN nationals, women, children, the sick and the elderly. The Meeting underscored the importance of release from any arbitrary detention. The Meeting commended the efforts of various ASEAN Member States and various East Asia Summit Participating Countries in providing humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and urged all ASEAN Member States and external partners to continue providing and facilitating such assistance for Gaza. The Meeting supported the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the execution of its mandate and the UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza to discharge her task effectively and efficiently, and to begin the work on post-conflict reconstruction as well as the work of other international aid organisations. The Meeting called for rapid, safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to all those in need, including through increased capacity at border crossings, including by sea. The Meeting called on all parties to the conflict to protect civilians and to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The Meeting urged all parties concerned to work towards a peaceful resolution to

the conflict with a view to realising the two-State solution in accordance with international law and the relevant UNSC and UNGA resolutions. The Meeting took note, and some Ministers underlined the importance of the order on provisional measures issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 26 January 2024. The Meeting acknowledged the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ on 19 July 2024. In this context, the Meeting reaffirmed the importance of upholding international law. The Meeting expressed great concern over the escalation of tension in the Middle East and called on all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint, avoid acts that may aggravate the situation, and resolve differences through diplomacy and dialogue in the interest of maintaining peace and stability in the region.

**Other matters**

- 49. The Meeting noted the proposed outcome document of the 19<sup>th</sup> EAS and also noted with appreciation the work of the Group of the EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta towards finalising this statement.
- 50. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the upcoming 19<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit to be held in October 2024 in Lao PDR.
- 51. The Meeting looked forward to the convening of the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting to be held in Malaysia in 2025.

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