



**ASEAN  
CAMBODIA 2022**

**ASEAN A.C.T.:**  
**Addressing Challenges Together**

## **CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN PLUS THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING**

**4 August 2022, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

1. The 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on 4 August 2022 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and chaired by His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia.

### **Review and Future Direction of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Cooperation**

2. The Meeting reaffirmed the importance of the APT process as a main vehicle to promote peace, stability and cooperation in East Asia towards the long-term goal of building an East Asian community, with ASEAN as the driving force. The Meeting reiterated the commitment to further strengthening and deepening the APT functional cooperation under the APT process. The Meeting further underlined that the APT process continued to play mutually reinforcing and complementary roles with other ASEAN-led frameworks. The Meeting also recognised the contribution of the APT to ASEAN's efforts towards realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and deepening regional integration in East Asia. The Meeting noted the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

3. The Meeting appreciated the significant progress achieved under the APT Cooperation Work Plan (2018-2022), particularly in the areas of non-traditional security, finance, food and agriculture, environment and sustainable development, science and technology, tourism, culture, education, civil service, health, and people-to-people contacts which paved the way for further progress of the APT Cooperation.

4. The Meeting adopted the successor APT Cooperation Work Plan (2023-2027) and tasked senior officials to coordinate its full and effective implementation in consultation with relevant APT sectoral bodies. The new Cooperation Work Plan will continue to serve as a principle guide to further enhance the APT cooperation over the next five years towards the long-term goal of establishing an East Asian Community.

5. The Meeting shared views on the need to further enhance dialogue and cooperation to address non-traditional security issues, such as trafficking in persons, cybercrime, countering terrorism and violent extremism, border management and illicit drugs trafficking. The Meeting looked forward to enhancing maritime cooperation to include capability development on maritime industry.

6. The Meeting reaffirmed the role of APT cooperation in mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting acknowledged the support and contribution of the Plus Three countries to ASEAN Member States, and ASEAN's initiatives in addressing COVID-19, among others, the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (RRMS), the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and Implementation Plan, and the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF). The Meeting emphasized the need to expand vaccine cooperation and promote equitable access to and accelerate the production and distribution of safe, effective, quality and affordable vaccines for all, as well as to consider ASEAN's potential as a regional vaccine hub. The Meeting noted the progress on the discussion of the Concept Note of the establishment of an APT Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (APTRMS) by the relevant APT sectoral body, as well as China's offer of Provisional Product List of the APTRMS. It has been underscored in some meetings that this proposal complements the RRMS.

7. The Meeting further underlined the need to strengthen APT collaboration in advancing the region's recovery from the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the progress made on the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Plan of Action (APT PoA) on Mitigating the Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic which was endorsed at the 23<sup>rd</sup> AEM Plus Three Consultations on 28 August 2020, and the ASEAN Plus Three Economic Ministers' Joint Statement on Mitigating the Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic adopted on 4 June 2020, which would further strengthen collaboration and cooperation between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries, as well as prepare the region for future situations, and achieve post-pandemic economic recovery. The Meeting stressed the importance of keeping the markets open for trade and investment to strengthen the resiliency and sustainability of regional supply chains and maintain necessary flow of goods and services, as underlined in the APT Leaders' Statement on Strengthening APT Cooperation for Economic and Financial Resilience in the Face of Emerging Challenges adopted by the Leaders at the 23<sup>rd</sup> APT Summit in November 2020. The Meeting was satisfied with the early entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement as this reflects our strong commitment to uphold a fair and open multilateral trading system. The full implementation of the RCEP Agreement will provide a powerful stimulus to the post-Covid-19 socio-economic recovery efforts, incentivize new trade and investment opportunities, as well as help safeguard regional supply chains.

8. The Meeting called for the enhancement of APT cooperation in ensuring food security, particularly in the post-pandemic period, including through strengthening and the effective utilisation of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), in order to overcome possible food shortages as well as strengthen the resiliency and sustainability of regional food supply chains by working closely together to ensure that markets are kept open and transportation of agricultural and food products are facilitated. The Meeting reiterated the importance of enhancing cooperation to achieve innovative and sustainable agricultural production and food systems, in light of the concerns over the food crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis.

9. The Meeting stressed the need to assist people and businesses affected by the impact of COVID-19, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), start-ups and vulnerable groups, including through facilitating them in using digital economy and technologies to allow the MSMEs to maintain operations. The Meeting further reaffirmed their continuing support for future initiatives aimed at preparing MSMEs for the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

10. The Meeting recognised the potentials of digital transformation to boost the region's long-term competitiveness and improve the livelihood of its people. The Meeting supported the development of digital economy and innovation to strengthen regional resilience. The Meeting expressed appreciation for the strong interest of the Plus Three countries in advancing smart and sustainable cities development in the region through the ASEAN Smart Cities Network and ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy.

11. The Meeting underlined the importance of the ASEAN+3 Finance process in enhancing regional economic and financial stability. The Meeting welcomed the continued commitment by APT Finance Meeting and Central Bank Governors to strengthen the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM). The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment to enhance the readiness of the CMIM, and further promote the Regional Financial Arrangement (RFA) as a reliable layer of the Global Financial Safety Net. The Meeting recognized the potential risks to regional financial stability caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed the need to foster closer regional financial cooperation and policy coordination and support the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) in monitoring the economic and financial development in the region and providing timely risk assessment and policy advice. The Meeting commended new initiatives including Financial Digitalization, which are well-aligned with the development trend within the region.

12. The Meeting noted the substantial progress made under the ASEAN+3 financial cooperation process, including those contributed by the four Working Groups (WGs). The Meeting acknowledged the recommendations of WG1 to explore the pilot usage of standardized core project finance loan documents and its draft report on regional post-COVID infrastructure priorities in partnership with the Asian Development Bank

(ADB), pleased with the progress achieved by WG2 in developing the ASEAN+3 Macro-structural Framework, further acknowledged WG3's concept paper on Disaster Risk Financing, and welcomed WG4's work on fintech's regional policy coordination and the introduction of Open Banking System. In this regard, the Meeting looked forward to WGs' cooperation with the ASEAN-ROK Financial Cooperation Centre which was launched this April. The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment to further enhance the operational readiness of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) Regional Financial Arrangement (RFA) as a reliable layer of the Global Financial Safety Net. The Meeting further acknowledged the role of the Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI) in strengthening of financial stability and mitigating vulnerability through continued progress toward implementing the Medium-Term Road Map 2019-2022. The Meeting underscored the need to continue supporting efforts of the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF) in strengthening the financial resilience of ASEAN Member States against climate and disaster risks.

13. The Meeting commended the efforts of the ASEAN-China Centre, ASEAN-Japan Centre and ASEAN-Korea Centre to promote trade, investment, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges between and among ASEAN and the Plus Three countries. The Meeting was pleased to note that the three Centres had established regular consultation meetings and called for the Centres to enhance linkages among them by exploring possible joint projects in areas of common interests.

14. The Meeting reiterated the importance of enhancing linkages and synergies between ASEAN Connectivity with other key connectivity initiatives through implementing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Connecting the Connectivities Initiative. The Meeting welcomed the successful commencement of the Lao PDR-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project (LTMS PIP) on 23 June 2022 in support of regional interconnectivity and the broader vision of the ASEAN Power Grid (APG). The Meeting called on APT countries to advance projects and activities that will strengthen connectivity cooperation in implementing MPAC 2025 and further contribute towards greater connectivity in the East Asia region.

15. The Meeting encouraged APT members to be actively involved in strengthening cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) with mutual benefits, particularly in harnessing STI to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and in accelerating Low Carbon Economy through the Fourth Industrial revolution (4IR) and its technologies. The Meeting further noted that ongoing STI initiatives under APT are centered around STI education capacity development which includes ASEAN+3 Teacher Workshop and training in the field of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); ASEAN+3 Junior Science Odyssey; Da Vinci Science Award and Science Research Contest.

16. The Meeting emphasised the importance of cultural and tourism exchanges and people-to-people links to heighten awareness and foster intercultural understanding

and ASEAN identity in the region. In this regard, the Meeting encouraged the effective implementation of the projects under the new ASEAN Plus Three Work Plan on Cooperation in Culture and the Arts 2022-2025. The Meeting also looked forward to the promotion of the 10+3 Network of Culture Cities and City-Level Exchanges especially through the Network of APT Culture Cities.

17. The Meeting acknowledged the efforts made to implement the priority areas of APT health cooperation, which include universal health coverage, utilising ICT for healthcare, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, traditional and complementary medicine, healthy and 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.

18. The Meeting noted the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaborative activities to be undertaken in promoting healthy and active ageing as complemented by the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) in which the agreement entered into force in 2020. The Meeting also noted the commitment of the APT health sector to continue efforts on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) and the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED III) to enhance ASEAN Member States and Plus Three Countries' capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats.

19. The Meeting welcomed the commitment of the APT Health Ministers' Meeting on 15 May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia, in supporting the establishment and operationalization of ASEAN's current initiatives and mechanisms and took note of the launch of the ASEAN-ROK Health Ministers' Meeting on this occasion. The Meeting also called on the need to cooperate in the facilitation of medical supplies, development of more robust and resilient regional health systems, build a regional supply chain of vaccines and Therapeutics and Diagnostic tools which are safe and effective, as well as to further enhance cooperation through the implementation of the ASEAN Health Cluster Work Programmes and COVID-19 information sharing and risk assessment.

20. The Meeting encouraged greater cooperation to enhance media and information capacity-building through leveraging media convergence particularly in digital journalism, media literacy, production and distribution of media content, as well as development of broadcast systems and services that cater to people with visual and hearing impairment. In doing so, the Meeting could better promote media and digital inclusiveness and effective dissemination of government policies, public health and safety information, with a view to minimise the harmful effects of misinformation and fake news, as highlighted at the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 14 April 2020.

21. The Meeting reiterated the commitment to advancing cooperation in promoting sustainable inclusive and innovative development, as well as in strengthening cooperation with all stakeholders, including the private sector, to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Meeting called for development of collaborative projects to protect and conserve the environment and biodiversity, to promote sustainable use of natural resources including sustainable forest management and water resource management, and to address the impact of climate change and the issue of marine plastic debris. The Meeting noted the progress of implementation of the APT Marine Plastic Debris Cooperative Action Initiative and took note the convening of the 18<sup>th</sup> APT Senior Officials' Meeting on Environment in September 2021 hosted by Brunei Darussalam as well as the 17<sup>th</sup> APT Environment Ministers' Meeting in October 2021 where the achievements and progress of regional cooperation efforts on a number of environmental issues were underlined.

22. The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment to forging closer cooperation in poverty alleviation for sustainable development, promoting and to protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups, and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women. The Meeting welcomed the support of the Plus Three countries for the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (RPA-EVAW) and Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Children (RPA-VAC) and their participation in ASEAN's initiatives to promote and protect the rights of women and children in the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) Work Plan 2021-2025. The Meeting also commended the adoption of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and looked forward to its implementation.

23. The Meeting reiterated the need for an enabling environment with supporting instruments that would facilitate student mobility with quality assurance among the APT countries. In this regard, they looked forward to the continued implementation of the APT Guidelines on Transcripts and Supplemental Documents for Academic Records of Exchange Students and the recently adopted ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025 which aims to ensure efficiency and synergies among the many ASEAN education cooperation frameworks. The Meeting took note of the ASEAN efforts in dealing with the learning loss and resilience through the adoption of "Reopen, Recover and Resilience: Guidelines for ASEAN Countries" by the 27th ASCC Council Meeting on 30 March 2022. The Meeting also noted the: (i) progress made in implementing the APT Plan of Action on Education 2018-2025; (ii) successful convening of the 6th APT Education Ministers' Meeting in 2021, the 8th Meeting of the Working Group on Student Mobility and Quality Assurance of Higher Education amongst APT Countries in 2020 and the conduct of Expert Meeting on the Institutional Provision for New Modes of Higher Education in 2021; (iii) finalisation and endorsement by the APT Working Group of the Guide on Making Information Available Online to Promote Student Mobility in the ASEAN Plus Three Region; (iv) convening of the 1st Drafting Team Meeting to present and discuss the ASEAN Plus Three Joint

Guidelines on the Institutional Provision for New Modes of Higher Education; and (v) looked forward to the 6<sup>th</sup> APT Education Ministers' Meeting (EMM) in October 2022.

24. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the commitment of the APT Meeting on Youth to further strengthen ASEAN Plus Three collaborations on youth development to address the challenges of Industry 4.0, digitalization and the evolving demand of the labour market. The Meeting commended the efforts of the APT Meeting on Youth in providing greater access for engagement among youth in APT countries and establishing effective communication through various annual youth exchanges and community immersions which provide opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural understanding. The Meeting also welcomed the adoption of the APT Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025 by the ASEAN Plus Three Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY+3) and look forward to its implementation.

25. The Meeting commended the work of the APT Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM+3) in implementing the ACCSM+3 Work Plan 2016-2020 which covered areas of mutual interests including e-governance, human resource management and human resource development, productivity in public sector, good governance, public sector reform, local administration capacity building and cooperation, and research and innovation. The Meeting noted with appreciation the progress made under the ACCSM+3 Work Plan 2021-2025 which would further promote good governance and support the agility and resilience of ASEAN's civil service amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting also welcomed the initiatives supported by the APT Cooperation Fund that sought to strengthen the overall capabilities of the ASEAN Civil Services, including the ongoing Baseline Study on Governance Systems among APT Countries and the adoption of the ASEAN Guidelines on Public Service Delivery. The Meeting looked forward to the Study Visits of ACCSM to ROK and China, as part of the implementation of the Guidelines. The Meeting also welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters Framework of Strategic Partnerships to guide Member States in building partnerships with other ASEAN sectoral bodies and external parties, including APT countries, in promoting good governance principles, agile civil service in digital era, and other areas of mutual interest pertaining to civil service matters. The Meeting looked forward to the convening of the 6<sup>th</sup> ACCSM+3 Heads of Civil Service Meeting on 5 August 2022 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, and welcomed the ACCSM Chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam for 2022-2024.

26. The Meeting noted the strengthening of APT cooperation in the labour sector through the adoption of the first APT Senior Labour Officials' Meeting (SLOM+3) Work Plan 2021-2025 by the APT Labour Ministers' Meeting (ALMM+3) on 28 October 2020 that commits to promote human resources development, inclusive growth, sustainable development as a response to the ASEAN economic integration, social dialogue, and occupational safety and health in the workplace. The Meeting noted with appreciation the progress made under 5-year priorities of the APT cooperation on labour for the period of 2021-2025 to support the attainment of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

The Meeting noted the successful convening of the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Japan High-Level Officials' Meeting on Caring Societies on Approaches to Maintaining Mental Well-Being in Response to COVID-19 hosted by Japan on 9-10 December 2021 and the 2021 ASEAN+3 HRD Forum with the theme, "Towards Green, Resilient and Inclusive Growth: Building Back Better through Skills Development and Employment" hosted by Republic of Korea on 4-5 November 2021. The Meeting also acknowledged the need to enhance progress based on the APT Leaders' Statement on "Cooperation on Mental Health Amongst Adolescents and Young Children" that was adopted at the 24<sup>th</sup> APT Summit. The Meeting supported the implementation of initiatives in the Roadmap of ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work as well as in the ASEAN TVET Council (ATC) Work Plan 2021-2030, and welcomed the collaboration with the APT countries. The Meeting looked forward to the convening of the 12<sup>th</sup> ALMM+3 this year and welcomed the ALMM Chairmanship of the Philippines for 2022-2024.

27. The Meeting noted the decision of the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) in October 2021 on the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management's (ACDM) engagement with China, Japan and ROK to establish the respective ACDM and AMMDM Plus mechanisms and looked forward to the inaugural AMMDM Plus ROK in October 2022. The Meeting encouraged the enhancement of regional cooperation on disaster management and emergency response by promoting cooperation on policy coordination, information exchanges and conducting joint exercises to effectively promote disaster management and reduce disaster risks and losses in the region by providing support toward the ongoing implementation of the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025 and the implementation of the ASEAN SHIELD initiative.

28. The Meeting acknowledged the important contribution of the East Asia Forum (EAF) as a Track 1.5 level platform for government, business, academia and think tanks to further deepen East Asia cooperation. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the convening of the 19<sup>th</sup> EAF under the theme of "*Working Towards an Inclusive and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19 in East Asia*", hosted by the Republic of Korea in December 2021, which highlighted the importance of strengthening resilience against future emergencies, COVID-19 recovery framework, inclusive economic growth and digital transformation, and sustainable development. The Meeting also looked forward to the convening of the 20<sup>th</sup> East Asia Forum in Viet Nam which coincides and contributes to the commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation process in 2022.

29. The Meeting also recognised the important contributions of the Network of East Asia Think-Tanks (NEAT) towards APT cooperation and welcomed the outcomes of the 35<sup>th</sup> NEAT Country Coordinators Meeting (CCM) held in April 2022, NEAT Working Group on "Digital transformation as a new driver for socio-economic

development” on 7 June 2022, NEAT Working Group on “Sustainable, inclusive, and resilient socio-economic recovery and growth in the midst of pandemic” held on 9 June 2022, NEAT Working Group Meeting on “Deepening APT Third-Party Market” held on 23 June 2022, NEAT Working Group on “Strategic Communication lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic: APT Experiences, Best practices and Way forward” held on 12 July 2022, and NEAT Working Group Meeting on “Sustainable Development Goals and East Asian Cooperation” held on 21 July 2022, NEAT Working Group on “Toward Carbon Neutrality in East Asia” held on 23 July 2022 and look forward to the 36th NEAT CCM and 19th Annual Conference.

30. The Meeting underscored the importance of forging closer cooperation in other areas such as science, technology and innovation, energy security, energy transition, minerals, and tourism. In addition, the Meeting encouraged the APT countries to explore closer cooperation in other areas such as MSMEs, climate change, women empowerment and gender equality, disaster management and narrowing the development gap.

### **Regional and International Issues**

#### *Developments in Myanmar*

31. The Meeting extensively discussed the recent developments in Myanmar and expressed concerns over the prolonged political crisis in the country, including the execution of four opposition activists. The Meeting welcomed the efforts to help address the situation including visits to Myanmar by Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in January 2022, and by H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar in March and late June to early July 2022. The Meeting was deeply disappointed by the limited progress in and lack of commitment of the Nay Pyi Taw authorities to the timely and complete implementation of the Five-Point Consensus. The Meeting reiterated its commitment to peace and stability in the region and expressed ASEAN's readiness to assist Myanmar in a positive, peaceful, and constructive manner, including in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Meeting agreed that the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar shall engage all Myanmar relevant stakeholders at the earliest.

#### *Developments in the Korean Peninsula*

32. The Meeting expressed grave concerns over the recent surge in DPRK's intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) testing and ballistic missile launches. This worrisome development reflects an increased tension on the Korean Peninsula and threaten peace and stability in the region and in the world. The Meeting stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all parties concerned in order to realise lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. The Meeting called on the DPRK to fully comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions. The Meeting

reiterated the commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. The Meeting reiterated the readiness to play a constructive role, including through utilising ASEAN-led platforms in promoting a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue amongst the concerned parties. Some Ministers emphasised the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

### **Other Matters**

33. The Meeting discussed the preparations for the 25th APT Summit to be held in November 2022, Cambodia.

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