

# ASEAN ANNUAL REPORT 2016 – 2017



**Partnering for Change,  
Engaging the World**





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Engaging the World**

**The ASEAN Secretariat  
Jakarta**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

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# FOREWORD

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Le Luong Minh".

**LE LUONG MINH**  
Secretary-General of ASEAN

2017 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN's establishment as a regional organisation founded on the ideals of peace, prosperity and harmony. Five decades of evolution and development has brought ASEAN the unprecedented level of economic growth and peace dividends that have galvanised its position as one of the world's successful inter-governmental groupings. Various mechanisms have been established for political and security cooperation within the region, and between ASEAN and external partners. These mechanisms have resulted in tangible outcomes for ASEAN, laying the foundation for economic and socio-cultural development.

Over the last 12 months, in efforts towards the realisation of Vision 2025, ASEAN has made substantial progress.

In the political-security pillar, further efforts have been undertaken in building a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centred community. ASEAN has prioritised the maintenance of regional peace and stability through regional security architectures that it helped to establish. ASEAN remains proactive in enhancing cooperation and collaboration

with external partners and interested parties. To date, 88 countries/organisations have appointed their Ambassadors to ASEAN. The number of non-ASEAN Contracting Parties to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation has increased to 25. Further requests were received from various countries to establish formal partnership with ASEAN. ASEAN has also stepped up efforts to address important issues such as irregular migration and trafficking in persons through the adoption of critical measures.

In the economic pillar, ASEAN has successfully delivered on its 2016 priorities which would further facilitate trade and create an enabler, especially for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Achievements include the adoption of various frameworks aimed at creating a conducive environment for business in the region, the launch of the ASEAN Tariff Finder as well as the full operational plan for the ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade. There was also progress in the new focus areas of the AEC Blueprint 2025. For 2017, ASEAN is picking up the overall thematic priority of “Inclusive, Innovation-led Growth” for the AEC to be pursued through strategic measures.

The progress ASEAN made in the socio-cultural field was considerable in terms of translating the 2025 blueprint and various ASEAN commitments into concrete regional cooperative programmes and projects. ASEAN’s accomplishments in the past one year include policy actions, programmes and activities that highlight ASEAN as a resilient, dynamic and inclusive community that is a model of regionalism, and a global player. Among others, these initiatives will deepen sense of ASEAN identity among stakeholders and ensure balance between sustainable development and sustainable environment.

Moving forward, it remains fundamental for ASEAN to preserve the current peaceful and stable environment for economic development and regional integration that will bring benefits to the ASEAN peoples. Harmonising national policies and the interests of the organisation as a whole will make ASEAN stronger to overcome unfolding challenges and spread the fruits of integration to the region’s 629 million people in all walks of life.



Security screening at an ASEAN airport.

# **ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)**

**E**nsuring a safe and secure environment for the people of ASEAN remains the primary goal of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Pillar. This has become more critical in light of new regional and international uncertainties. The rise of populism, protectionism, increasing threats from terrorism and violent extremism, as well as growing trends against globalisation and multilateralism have made the global landscape increasingly unpredictable. Against this backdrop, ASEAN remains committed to building a strong, united, and resilient community, while expediting the regional integration process to benefit all levels of the ASEAN Community. Key APSC policy frameworks to ensure ASEAN Centrality, political cohesion, security cooperation, global engagement, regional resilience, and peace and stability have to be adjusted and enhanced to enable ASEAN to cope with new challenges and uncertainties.

ASEAN's external relations have been deepened and strengthened in the past year. Dialogue Partners, including the major powers, remain committed to engaging ASEAN and there is growing interest from other external parties to establish formal partnerships with the group.

## **Main Priorities**

Last year marked the first year of the ASEAN Community following its formal establishment in 2015. In the APSC Pillar, efforts have been put into building a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centred ASEAN Community. These include the implementation of the ASEAN

Community Vision 2025 and the APSC Blueprint 2025 – milestone documents adopted by ASEAN Leaders to serve as roadmaps for the region into the next decade. While moving ahead as a community, the fundamental principles that have guided ASEAN in the past, such as in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, remain intact.

Maintaining regional peace and stability continues to be a priority. Over the years, ASEAN has developed its regional security architecture, which came to comprise institutionalised mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). These mechanisms have been critical to ASEAN's efforts to create a peaceful, secure and stable region.

The EAS has been gaining strength as a Leaders-led forum to promote dialogue and cooperation on strategic, political, security and economic issues of common interest and concern to the region. ASEAN acts as the driving force for the summit while working in close partnership with the other participating countries. Regular engagement of the EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta had been established to augment coordination and ensure implementation of the Leaders' decisions.

Strengthening ASEAN institutions is still an indispensable element of the ASEAN Community building agenda. Efforts to streamline ASEAN meetings and activities have been carried out to improve efficiency. Among the main



priorities last year were streamlining ASEAN work processes, improving coordination among sectoral bodies, expanding ASEAN external relations and strengthening the operation of the ASEAN Secretariat.

ASEAN continues to work with its Dialogue Partners and other external partners to implement their plans of action for deepening the community building and regional integration process, guided by the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. The group is also engaging countries that were recently conferred formal partnership status to develop substantive cooperation.

### **Key Achievements**

*ASEAN Centrality* – ASEAN's central role in ASEAN-led mechanisms has been elevated. The group has taken a common stance and adopted collective response to regional and international situations. It issued a number of statements last year to project a common ASEAN position, such as on the Korean peninsula situation and condemnation of incidents of terrorism in the region and beyond. Special meetings in the face of critical developments affecting the region were also convened, including a Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kunming in June 2016 to address developments in the South China Sea and an ASEAN Foreign

Ministers' Retreat in December 2016 on the situation in Rakhine State of Myanmar to address humanitarian issues.

*Peace and Stability* – Initiatives and measures have been taken to maintain and promote regional peace and security, including multi-level talks and consultations with Dialogue Partners and external parties. As the South China Sea issue continues to capture the attention of the international community, the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and intensified dialogues for an early conclusion of the Code of Conduct (COC) have played a key role in addressing the situation. ASEAN and China agreed to adopt two practical measures to reduce tension and prevent conflicts in the South China Sea, namely hotline communications in response to maritime emergencies and application of the Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES).

*Defence Cooperation* – Defence cooperation has gained strength through the initiatives and activities pursued under the ADMM and ADMM-Plus. The work of the ADMM and ADMM-Plus last year greatly boosted ASEAN's capacities in responding to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) situations in a timely and effective manner. This included the launch of the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine in Bangkok.

Work to operationalise the ASEAN Militaries Ready Group on HADR is progressing with the adoption of the group's terms of reference last year. Efforts to improve coordination and cooperation between ASEAN's and Dialogue Partners' militaries in HADR situations had advanced with the finalisation of the Standard Operating Procedure for the Multinational Coordination Centre (MNCC). Four field exercises organised last year on maritime security, HADR, military medicine, humanitarian mine action, peacekeeping operations and counterterrorism, had enhanced interoperability and further built ASEAN's capacities to address future security challenges. To reinforce regional cooperation to protect the economic, security and well-being of the people of ASEAN, the military and defence establishments have included cyber security to their list of concerns.

*Transnational Crime/Non-traditional Security Issues* – ASEAN has stepped up efforts to address the issue of irregular migration and trafficking in persons through adopting critical measures such as setting up a trust fund for emergency humanitarian assistance for irregular movement of persons in the Southeast

Asian region. A regional legal framework is also in place with the entry into force of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). Along with its corresponding Plan of Action, the convention will address the issue of trafficking in persons in a more effective and efficient manner, through prevention of the crime and protection of the victims.

The growing threat of terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalisation received close attention across the APSC Pillar. The relevant APSC sectoral bodies have agreed on the need for closer collaboration and cooperation, including timely exchange of intelligence among Member States, to enhance ASEAN's capacity to handle this threat and secure the region.

APSC Sectoral Bodies have also focused their efforts on initiatives that will directly benefit the people of ASEAN. Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of ASEAN Member States are being discussed. Steps to explore the feasibility of an ASEAN common visa have been taken last year with the adoption of the



ASEAN Leaders in a show of unity



terms of reference of an ad hoc working group on the issue.

*Combat Against Illicit Drugs* – Addressing the drug abuse problem in the region is a standing priority of the APSC Pillar. A new 10-year Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs (ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2025) was adopted last year to tackle it. An ASEAN Cooperation Plan to specifically address the persistent problem of illicit drug production and trafficking in the Golden Triangle is also being developed.

*Legal Cooperation* – Programmes and activities to improve ASEAN cooperation in law and legal matters are continuing. The Council of Chief Justices has recently been accredited as an ASEAN Charter entity. It will facilitate closer cooperation and collaboration among the ASEAN judiciaries and contribute to raising awareness

of the legal systems of ASEAN Member States through various means, including the establishment of an ASEAN Judiciaries Portal.

*Human Rights* – The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) continues with the promotion and protection of human rights within ASEAN. Last year it prioritised its efforts to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in the ASEAN Community, including the establishment of a cross-pillar Task Force to develop a regional action plan. The AICHR in a cross-sectoral collaboration with the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) works to implement a human rights-based approach in combatting trafficking in persons.

*External Relations* – ASEAN's relations with Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue and Development Partners, the UN and other



The ASEAN colours

external parties, have taken roots through existing frameworks and mechanisms, as well as the effective implementation of the various plans of action that are in line with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. ASEAN continues to play its central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture through ASEAN-led processes.

Interest from countries outside the region to forge partnerships with ASEAN continues to grow. At the 49<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) in July 2016, ASEAN conferred the status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner and Development Partner on Switzerland and Germany, respectively. The group also increased engagement with the 88 Non-ASEAN Ambassadors accredited to ASEAN (NAAAs) and had adopted the *Guidelines for Engagement of the CPR (Committee of Permanent Representatives) with the NAAAs* in Jakarta in

September 2016. In addition, two new ASEAN Committees in Third Countries and International Organisations (ACTCs) were established in early 2017, bringing the total number of ACTCs to 52.

## Conclusion

ASEAN will face significant external uncertainties and headwind as it pursues its integration and community building efforts. To move forward, it will have to keep improving itself as a rules-based, people-centred, people-oriented organisation. ASEAN must maintain its Centrality while responding effectively to challenges from within and beyond its borders in order to preserve a secure region for its people. The APSC Pillar will help to forge an ASEAN that is united and capable of contributing to peace and stability in the region and play a central role in drawing the regional architecture.



A busy port in ASEAN

# **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)**

In 2016, ASEAN successfully delivered its priorities for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) under Lao PDR's chairmanship. These priority deliverables aim to facilitate trade and create an enabling environment, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The priorities also included the adoption of the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework, the ASEAN Institutional Framework on Access to Finance for MSMEs, the Report and Work Programme on Starting a Business in ASEAN, the ASEAN Guidelines for Special Economic Zones Development and Collaboration, the ASEAN Food Safety Regulatory Framework and the Pakse Declaration on ASEAN Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters and Corridors. Other major achievements in 2016 included the launch of the ASEAN Tariff Finder in September 2016, also a priority deliverable of the Lao PDR Chairmanship, as well as the full operationalization of the ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade (ASSIST), an online trade facilitation tool aimed at delivering practical solutions to ASEAN-based enterprises for specific intra-ASEAN cross border problems on trade in goods. The AEC Symposium 2016, with the theme of "Global Megatrends and Their Impact on the AEC", was also held as part of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) in September 2016.

Progress has been made in the new focus areas of the AEC Blueprint 2025 in response to global developments and to ensure a forward-looking AEC 2025. These include the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic

Commerce (ACCEC) in November 2016, the adoption and endorsement of the ASEAN Work Plan for Enhancing the GVC Agenda (2016-2025) in August 2016, and the ASEAN Work Plan on Good Regulatory Practices (2016-2025) in April 2017.

The overall thematic priority for the AEC of the Philippines' ASEAN Chairmanship in 2017 is "Inclusive, Innovation-led Growth". This would be pursued through three strategic measures – increasing trade and investment, integrating MSMEs in the Digital Economy, and developing an innovation-driven economy.

## **Achievements in the Five Characteristics of the AEC Blueprint 2025**

With 96% of internal tariff rates at zero, the focus of Characteristic I of the AEC Blueprint 2025 (Highly Integrated and Cohesive Economy), is on trade facilitation measures. The process of transposing the ATIGA Tariff Reduction Schedules (TRS) from AHTN 2012 (ASEAN Harmonised Tariff Nomenclature 2012) into 2017 is making good progress. Meanwhile, two Self-Certification Pilot Projects are being smoothly executed, making headway to full implementation of the ASEAN-wide Self-Certification Scheme to facilitate trade. In this context, the amended ATIGA Operational Certification Procedures to allow acceptance of the electronic Form D, a certificate of origin, under the ASEAN Single Window (ASW) integrated communication system, has been endorsed. The ASEAN Customs



Transit System (ACTS) pilot project was also launched in August, 2016 with the participation of Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

The notification system for newly introduced non-tariff measures has been strengthened while the ASEAN Trade Repository is online (<http://atr.asean.org/>), with all ASEAN Member States (AMS) having put in place the National Trade Repositories in 2016, which contain information on trade laws and regulations. The ASEAN Single Window, the Self-Certification and standards harmonisation are other trade facilitation initiatives that increasingly contribute to making ASEAN a more connected region and augment the value chain relationships.

Negotiation continues for the ASEAN Agreements on Regulatory Framework for Traditional Medicines and Health Supplements with the

target to be concluded in 2017. The Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Bio-Equivalence Study Reports and the MRA on Inspection and Certification System on Food Hygiene for Prepared Foodstuff were finalised and are expected to be signed by all ASEAN Economic Ministers in 2017. Meanwhile, the MRA on Type Approval for Automotive Product, the MRA on Building and Construction Materials and the ASEAN Guidelines on Type Approval Control for non-automatic weighing instruments are anticipated to be finalised in 2017.

In the area of services, ASEAN Member States are intensifying efforts to finalise the outstanding 10<sup>th</sup> Package of Commitments under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), with the schedule for completion in 2017. The 10<sup>th</sup> Package of Commitments of Air Transport Services under AFAS is also being negotiated to



Agricultural and marine commodities  
for the people of ASEAN and the world

further liberalise air transport ancillary services in ASEAN and is to be signed in October 2017. Financial services liberalisation has also progressed with the ratification of the protocols to implement the Sixth and Seventh Packages of Commitments on Financial Services under AFAS, with the Eighth Package targeted to be signed in 2018. In parallel, negotiation on the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA) is ongoing, scheduled for completion in 2017.

Indonesia and Malaysia have signed the first bilateral agreement under the ASEAN Banking Integration Framework, while negotiations between Malaysia and the Philippines have been concluded in April 2017.

In addition to the ASEAN Collective Investment Schemes Framework, ASEAN has included green finance, professional mobility, and

next-generation stock exchange connectivity as new initiatives to achieve an interconnected, inclusive, and resilient regional capital market. ASEAN has also endorsed the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2016-2025 for the ASEAN Taxation Cooperation as a work plan to ensure timely implementation of tax-related initiatives.

The ASEAN Financial Inclusion Framework has been adopted to facilitate greater financial inclusion in the region. Meanwhile, the ASEAN Insurance Forum was established to advance the integration of the insurance sector, with the Guiding Principles and Roadmap for the ASEAN Insurance Integration Framework currently being developed.

The Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA) entered into force on 12 September 2016, which provides



#### One of tourist destinations in ASEAN

the mechanism to facilitate amendment and modification of ASEAN Member States' Reservation Lists under the ACIA. The signing of the Second Protocol to Amend the ACIA will be completed in 2017 in order to implement the built-in agenda of the ACIA, specifically on the provision of performance requirements and definition of "natural person". In 2017, the Focused and Strategic (FAST) Action Agenda on Investment is introduced as one of the priority deliverables of the Philippines' Chairmanship of ASEAN, covering all pillars of liberalisation, protection, facilitation, and promotion of investment.

ASEAN has also been implementing initiatives that support financial stability through the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation, a multilateral currency swap arrangement, and through trade settlement in local currencies. The implementation

of a financial inclusion plan assists the ASEAN community of small businesses, traders and the unbanked, or those without a bank account, to have access to the financial system to build their business and plan their future.

Under Characteristic II (Competitive, Innovative and Dynamic ASEAN), initiatives to implement the ASEAN Competition Action Plan 2025 have been undertaken. These included the Self-Assessment Toolkit for self-review of AMS and the Regional Capacity Building Roadmap marked for completion in 2017. Work is ongoing to develop the elements of an ASEAN regional cooperation framework, focusing on enforcement cooperation. The Inaugural Report of the ASEAN Expert Group on Competition was published in May 2017. The 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Competition Conference was also held from 8-9 March 2017 in Malaysia, with



### A stock exchange in ASEAN

the theme “ASEAN@50: Managing Change in a Competitive ASEAN”.

The establishment of a common ASEAN Consumer Protection framework is taking shape, with the development of a set of Consumer Protection Principles in 2017. These are to be validated and submitted to the 49<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting in September 2017 for endorsement. As part of the inclusive process, consultations with consumer associations have been held in 2017 to support consumer protection activities in ASEAN and gather feedback from these groups. Six consumer protection modules are being adapted and developed into teaching tools.

The AMS Intellectual Property (IP) Offices have completed trademark and design diagnostics in 2016 as part of the initiative to put in place

strategic and operational policies for enhanced delivery of services. The ASEAN IP Portal ([www.aseanip.org](http://www.aseanip.org)) has been updated and the usage of the ASEAN Patent Examination Co-operation (ASPEC) platform has expanded. The Common Guidelines for Substantive Examination on Trademarks, a reference document to focus on and guide the trademark examination practices in ASEAN, has been published in 2017, while the Common Guidelines for the Substantive Examination of Industrial Designs have been endorsed.

Under Characteristic III (Enhanced Connectivity and Sectoral Cooperation), the implementation of the *Kuala Lumpur Transport Strategic Plan 2016-2025* has made significant progress with the adoption of the ASEAN Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Policy Framework 2.0, which is



aimed at increasing the road network efficiency and improving traffic flow. The ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Cross-Border Transport of Passengers by Road Vehicles (ASEAN CBTP) has also been finalised, while the Framework of Cooperation on Certification of Competency for Near Coastal Voyages (NCV) has been adopted under the ASEAN Single Shipping Market. The Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Flight Crew Licensing and an ASEAN Air Traffic Management Master Plan to achieve a Seamless ASEAN Sky are under development.

In *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*, the ASEAN Personal Data Protection Framework has been adopted in November 2016, which shows ASEAN's commitment to protect personal data and promote the growth of online services in ASEAN. The Telecommunications

and Information Technology Senior Officials Meeting (TELSOM) also adopted the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy in March 2017 to guide cooperation on cybersecurity within ASEAN and with Dialogue Partners. Additionally, the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Electronic Commerce (ACCEC) has been established to enhance cross-sectoral coordination in promoting the development of e-commerce in the region.

To enhance *energy security and connectivity*, the preliminary study on the legal and commercial aspects of liquefied natural gas (LNG) destination contracts has been completed, while studies on the formation of regional institutions to advance the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) are being pursued. A regional Policy Roadmap for Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) for Lighting to ensure energy efficiency for major appliances



**Transport cooperation facilitates movement of people in the region.**

and energy-intensive products is currently under development.

In the area of *Food, Agriculture, and Forestry*, ASEAN cooperation in the development and harmonisation of agricultural standards has gained momentum with the endorsement of various guidelines and standards in 2016, such as the Intra-ASEAN Phytosanitary Guidelines for mango and corn and the ASEAN Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHP) for Animal Welfare and Environmental Sustainability. Preparations for establishing the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonoses (ACCAHZ) to enhance coordination in the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases in ASEAN are ongoing. Work has commenced on strengthening regional cooperation on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

mitigation to protect human and animal health. This involves raising awareness and advocacy of AMR issues, promoting prudent use of antimicrobials, collaborating with relevant sectors and stakeholders, and enhancing surveillance capacities, diagnosis and research on AMR and antimicrobial usage (AMU).

The Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration campaign has been launched by ASEAN Tourism Ministers with a target of 121 million international tourist arrivals in 2017. The ASEAN Tourism Marketing Strategy 2017-2020, an instrument to translate the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 into detailed marketing activities, is being developed for finalisation in August 2017. To realise the full potential of cruise tourism in the region, an inaugural Cruise Dialogue was held on 19 January 2017 in Singapore. Trainings

for Master Trainers and Master Assessors for tour operation and travel agency divisions were also conducted in October-November 2016 to support full implementation of the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP).

ASEAN recognises that *technology and innovation* constitute a major force for economic growth and is drafting the ASEAN Declaration on Innovation, which would lay down the guiding principles and strategies for strengthening the ASEAN innovation ecosystem. To further operationalise the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025, an APASTI Implementation Plan has been adopted and the Call for Project Proposals funded by ASEAN Science, Technology and Innovation Fund (ASTIF) to realize the sectoral activities was planned for launch in 2017.

With a view to enhance science, technology and innovation (STI) collaboration and capacity, the Philippines and Thailand has pledged USD 1 million each to the proposed establishment of the ASEAN STI Partnership Contributions, which is open for participation of Member States on a voluntary and flexible basis. An ASEAN Open Innovation and Entrepreneurship Platform is also under development with the aim to synergise ASEAN talent mobility, human resource development and R&D programs with ASEAN innovation agenda.

Under Characteristic IV (A Resilient, Inclusive, People-Oriented and People-Centred ASEAN), initiatives for MSMEs are being ramped up to support micro, small and medium enterprises in ASEAN. These include the strategic goals incorporated in the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-2025 (SAP SMED 2025), which emphasise inclusive and innovative





#### **Exploring and utilising natural resources for the benefits of the ASEAN people**

growth towards enhancing the ecosystem for MSME development. Several ASEAN workshops on FTA utilisation for SMEs have been held to equip SMEs and experts from SME associations and supporting organisations with knowledge and skills on FTA utilisation to improve their competitiveness and access to the regional and global markets.

ASEAN also plans to organise capacity building for SMEs on international food standards. Another project aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of ASEAN SMEs through cluster development and international quality standard adherence is also in the pipeline for implementation. A study to review the current status of digital adoption by MSMEs across ASEAN Member States, along with detailed information on barriers encountered by MSMEs to digital adoption, is expected to kick off in 2017.

On the policy and regulatory front, work is underway on a set of Regional Principles for Good Business Registration Practices. These will serve as a reference framework for improving regulatory processes to enable faster registration of small businesses. Furthermore, a report on the baseline study undertaken to measure the 10 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the SAP SMED 2025 will be available in 2017.

On Characteristic V (Global ASEAN), the organisation continues to make good progress towards integrating the region into the global economy by improving/reviewing its existing free trade agreements (FTAs) and comprehensive economic partnership (CEP) agreements with China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. Negotiations between ASEAN and Hong Kong,China (HKG) on free

trade and investment agreements are at the final stages with the target for finalisation in 2017. Likewise, efforts are further intensifying to make progress on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations among the 10 AMS and their 6 FTA Partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and New Zealand), to achieve a swift conclusion of a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial agreement. To date, 19 rounds of RCEP negotiations have been held since its launch in 2012. On 8 September 2016, leaders from the 16 RCEP participating countries issued a Joint Leaders' Statement on RCEP which, among other things, reiterated the importance of advancing negotiations and

instructed ministers and officials to further intensify negotiations in a cooperative manner for the swift conclusion of the RCEP negotiations. ASEAN also continues to enhance economic cooperation with non-FTA Dialogue Partners. These global engagements signalled that ASEAN is open for business and is ready to participate in global value chains, while upholding its centrality and continued support for the multilateral trading system.

### **AEC 2025 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Fundamental mechanisms to operate the AEC Blueprint 2025, following its adoption at the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2015, have been put in place. To date, most of the AEC sectoral work plans have been adopted by the relevant

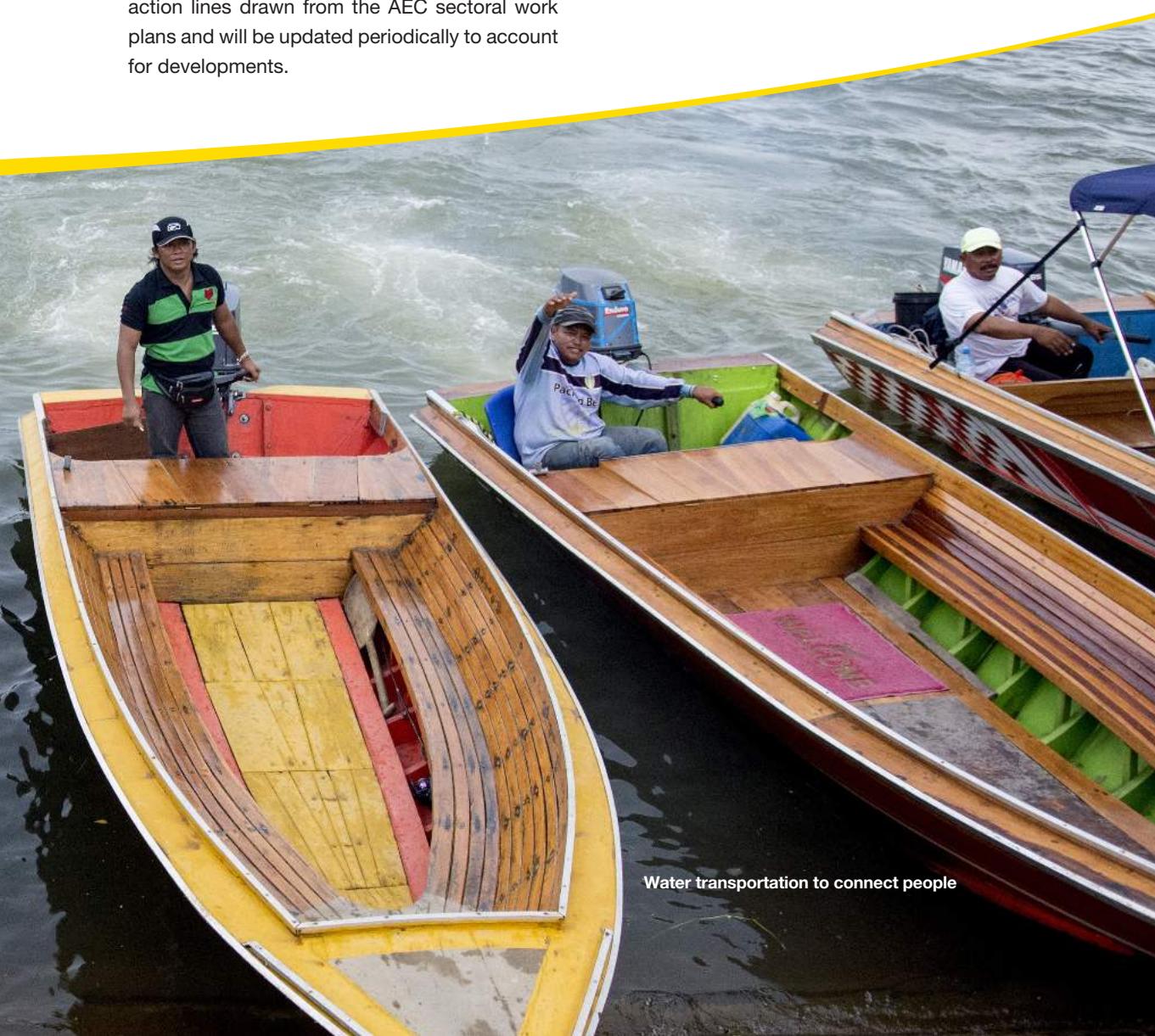


sectoral ministerial bodies and endorsed by the AEC Council. The ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the AEC Council have also endorsed the AEC 2025 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework in September 2016. The Framework enhances the previous mechanism by going beyond compliance monitoring to also monitor outcomes and evaluate impact of regional economic integration.

To keep stakeholders informed on implementation of the Blueprint, ASEAN made the AEC 2025 Consolidated Strategic Action Plan (CSAP) available to the public in February 2017. It serves as a single reference for key action lines drawn from the AEC sectoral work plans and will be updated periodically to account for developments.

To ensure robust operation of the AEC 2025 M&E Framework, internal databases for both compliance and outcome monitoring of the AEC are being developed, and are expected to be operational in 2017. A pamphlet on AEC 2025 Monitoring, “Towards ASEAN Economic Community 2025: Monitoring ASEAN Economic Integration,” has also been published and made available online. Reporting on the progress and outcome of ASEAN economic integration will be tailored for a wide range of audience.

In this regard, the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) plays a crucial role to support the AEC 2025 M&E Framework, notably through





Industrial sector is one of the strong pillars of economic growth.

the provision of timely and reliable statistics. In November 2016, the Sixth Session of the ACSS Committee reaffirmed its commitment to further strengthen regional statistical cooperation among AMS and continue to enhance its roles and respond proactively to emerging regional and global statistical demands by implementing the ACSS Strategic Plan 2016-2025. The harmonisation of three key statistical areas on international merchandise trade, international trade in services and foreign direct investment, remains priorities for the ACSS.

To this end, the ACSS Committee adopted the ASEAN 2025 Statistical Framework to be reflected in the Broad Framework for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Statistics (BFSDAS) Rev.2, comprising a set of tiered ASEAN Statistical

Indicators (ASI). The Committee has also endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on MDG/SDG Indicators (Millennium Development Goals/Sustainable Development Goals) and for the ASEAN System of National Accounts, on the other hand, the harmonisation of three key statistical areas on international merchandise trade, international trade in services and foreign direct investment, remains a priority for the ACSS. In addition, the ACSS M&E System is currently being finalised to monitor progress in the implementation of the ACSS Strategic Plan, in line with the AEC 2025 M&E Framework.

In conjunction with the ASEAN 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, three major statistical publications will be launched in August 2017; the 2017 ASEAN Final Statistical Report on the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs) 1990-2015 which examines the AMS's final achievements on the MDGs; the 2017 ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System (ACPMS) Report to complement the overall monitoring efforts of ASEAN 2025, particularly the AEC and ASCC Blueprints 2025; and Celebrating ASEAN: 50 years of evolution and progress, a statistical publication which showcases ASEAN economic and social progresses over the last five decades.

ASEAN celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017 and are undertaking many activities to mark the commemorative year. The ASEAN Economic Ministers held a "Roadshow" to Japan on 6-9 April 2017, during which they reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen economic and industrial cooperation in line with the implementation of the renewed ASEAN-Japan 10 year Strategic Economic Cooperation Roadmap.

Commemorative videos are also being produced on the ASEAN Expert Group on Competition

(AEGC) and the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP), as this year is also their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The portals of the AEGC (<http://www.asean-competition.org/>) and ACCP (<http://www.aseanconsumer.org/accp/>) will be fronted with commemorative banners. The Inaugural AEGC Annual Report will also be made available on the AEGC website.

In addition, the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Competition Conference carries the theme of ASEAN@50 while statistical activities are being held in conjunction with the anniversary. This includes a statistical publication highlighting ASEAN's evolution and progress over the last five decades, and statistical exhibits on ASEAN Day (8<sup>th</sup> August). ASEAN has also launched the Visit ASEAN@50 Golden Celebration campaign, a joint effort among Member States to showcase the region's rich diversity and promote ASEAN as a single tourism destination, with a target of 121 million international tourist arrivals in 2017.



**Advanced infrastructure to facilitate mobility around the region**



# ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community is striding towards a bold and forward-looking future, which will enrich and strengthen the ASEAN Community. Dubbed “the people-pillar” of the ASEAN Community, the ASCC works to ensure that the voices of stakeholders are brought to bear on the setting of direction and development priorities for the sectoral bodies from 2016 to 2020.

A year after the adoption of the ASCC Blueprint 2025, considerable progress has been achieved in translating it and various ASEAN commitments into concrete regional cooperative programmes and projects. In line with the priorities set under the Philippines’ chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017, under the theme “Partnering for Change, Engaging the World”, the region’s accomplishments highlight policy actions, programmes and activities that showcase ASEAN as a resilient, people-oriented, people-centred and resilient community. It is a model of regionalism but is also a global player.

## Key Achievements

### High-Level Policy Actions

At the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits in Vientiane, Lao PDR in 2016, as well as the 30<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Manila, Philippines in April 2017, the heads of state and government sealed their commitment to pursue regional cooperation in various areas to uplift the quality of life of the people of ASEAN:

1. *The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth* aims to bolster education services for out-of-school-children and youth through the implementation of the key principles of inclusivity, equity, accessibility, continuity, quality, flexibility and sustainability.
2. *The Vientiane Declaration on Reinforcing Cultural Heritage Cooperation in ASEAN* underscores the need to reinforce cultural heritage cooperation in ASEAN to protect, preserve and promote both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
3. *The ASEAN Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS: Fast-Tracking and Sustaining HIV and AIDS Responses to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030* envisions a future where, the AIDS epidemic is ended in ASEAN by 2030 through fast-tracking and sustaining ASEAN HIV and AIDS response.
4. *The Vientiane Declaration on Transition from Informal Employment to Formal Employment towards Decent Work Promotion in ASEAN* is another milestone. It works in tandem with the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to promote inclusive growth and eradicate poverty. As a follow-up to this declaration, the Regional Action Plan was developed and adopted by the ASEAN senior labour officials in May 2017.

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5. *The Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Culture and the Arts to Promote ASEAN's Identity Towards a Dynamic and Harmonious ASEAN Community*, adopted by ASEAN ministers in 2016, strengthened cooperation on using culture and the arts to further promote the ASEAN identity in the era of globalisation. It also reaffirms the importance of cultural awareness of and sensitivity to the diverse nature of ASEAN Member States' background. They are the essential foundation of communication that increases understanding and tolerance for the different cultural values, beliefs and perceptions in the region.
  6. *The Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region* was signed by ASEAN leaders in 2016 to ensure swift and scalable disaster emergency response within the region and beyond. Other sectors have also lent a hand to support implementation of the One ASEAN One Response Declaration, including the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management that is being drafted.
  7. *The ASEAN Joint Statement to the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 13), and the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of*

*the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP22), both reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to the conservation of biological diversity and to regional and international efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.*

8. *The ASEAN Declaration on the Role of the Civil Service as a Catalyst for Achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025* was signed at the 30<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit on 29 April 2017 in Manila, the Philippines. The declaration promotes cooperation and good governance in the civil service, and supports raising civil servants' professional capacity to help realise a people-centred, people-oriented ASEAN.

## **Strengthening Regional Engagement Mechanisms with Stakeholders**

The ASCC sectoral bodies are forging regional cooperation to realise the objectives of the ASCC Blueprint 2025. This is being done through a number of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement platforms. Dialogue and Development Partners, sub-regional organisations, academia, governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, and civil society organisations, have all been engaged to generate buy-in and support for deepening the sense of ASEAN identity and for building and sustaining the



**The people - one of ASEAN's greatest assets.**

ASEAN Community. Some of these engagement platforms highlight the inclusion of outstanding private sector members in the ASEAN Rural Development and Poverty Reduction Awards in recognition of their public-private partnership initiatives on poverty reduction. Another engagement platform is the ASEAN Red Ribbon for Outstanding Workplace (ARROW) Award for companies with remarkable HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention programmes for their employees. Continued encouragement of children's voice and participation in the ASEAN Children's Forum, and partnership among tri-partite partners and civil society in the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour are also regular activities under the ASCC.

### Promoting Inclusiveness in ASEAN

Recognising that urgent attention and action are required to address the underlying causes of

malnutrition in the region, an ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Collaborative Workshop on Nutrition Security was held to formulate the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition. It is to be adopted at the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2017.

The ASEAN health sector is likewise stepping up efforts against emerging infectious diseases by strengthening member states' laboratory capacities, enhancing disease surveillance, managing big data analytics, and combating anti-microbial resistance. These efforts help to mitigate biological threats and ensure health security in the region. In line with this year's priorities, the Philippines spearheaded the development of the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR): Combating AMR through One Health Approach* in consultation with the agriculture, animal health, commerce and environment sectors. This



ASEAN's cultural uniqueness is reflected in the people's way of life.



#### **The region abounds with rich cultural traditions.**

declaration is to be adopted by ASEAN leaders at their 31<sup>st</sup> Summit.

Last year some initiatives to promote inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as children and human trafficking victims, included the *Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) Quality Standards, and the Regional Review on Laws, Policies and Practices within ASEAN Relating to the Identification, Management and Treatment of Victims of Trafficking, Especially Women and Children*. The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) led these initiatives.

Early this year, the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ACWC started the development of gender mainstreaming strategies across all three pillars of the ASEAN Community. The

ACW and the ACWC are also jointly developing the regional guidelines for data collection and analysis of violence against women. The ACW and the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs' Network (AWEN) also continue to support initiatives on increasing access of women entrepreneurs to finance, credit, markets, skill training, technology and social protection.

#### **Building Resiliency in ASEAN**

ASEAN adopted a comprehensive strategy on disaster risk management that encourages a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. It encompasses coordination, planning, resource mobilisation and implementation through the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) 2016-2020 Work Plan.



The ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) is being organised annually in Singapore as a high-level forum to engage stakeholders, generate their support, and sharpen ASEAN's strategic engagements and thought leadership in disaster management. The 2016 SPDDM focused on engaging the private sector as champions of change and innovation to enhance ASEAN's capability in responding to disaster management and disaster risk reduction.

ASEAN also reaffirmed its commitment to prioritise school safety through the implementation of relevant regional and global frameworks, and to strengthen collaboration among different sectors and partners to advance the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative (ASSI) in the region. The ASSI Conference, held in February 2017 with the participation of relevant sectors and stakeholders, provided

a venue for knowledge exchange and sharing of lessons learned on comprehensive school safety programming. The conference discussed key issues in integrating disaster risk reduction in the education sector. These include the regional approach to comprehensive school safety and education in emergencies, the safe school network movement, and the resources and tools to enable a riskless environment.

Guided by the *Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region*, the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) has been engaging other sectors to ensure a swift and scalable disaster emergency response. Partners include the health, education, finance, urban planning and social protection sectors, which work with ACDM to integrate emergency response strategies. The committee



Informal sector as part of the economy

also works with the military to better coordinate civil-military response in times of disaster. This is further complemented through innovative partnerships with external partners such as the United Nations, the Corporate Citizens Foundation and the Shaw Foundation of Singapore. Other sectors have also lent support to implement the declaration, as well as the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Disaster Health Management that is currently being drafted.

A series of capacity building activities for local governments on delivery of social protection programmes in rural areas was also implemented as part of the Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication 2016-2020. A regional study is being conducted on food price spikes vis-à-vis food security at the household level.

As part of efforts to promote health resilience in ASEAN, the ASEAN Cities Getting to Zeros Project is being strengthened and expanded to free the region of new HIV infection, discrimination and HIV-related deaths.

### Sustainable Future for ASEAN

Concrete measures and initiatives are being ramped up to ensure a balance between development and sustainable environment. The ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment (ASPEN) is being developed as a comprehensive guide for ASEAN cooperation on the environment until 2025. The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN State of the Environment Report (SOER5) is being finalised to reflect the state of the ASEAN environment in the global context, and its prospects in view of the ASEAN Community 2025 Vision.

Aware of the impact and scale of the transboundary haze problem in ASEAN, the region has put in place institutional mechanisms and programmes to prevent, monitor and mitigate fires under the *ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP)* so as to achieve a haze-free ASEAN by 2020. *The Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation* to achieve a *Haze-Free ASEAN by 2020* and the *Comprehensive Plan of Action (PoA) on Transboundary Haze Pollution* will play an instrumental role. They will deliver cooperation and coordination to ensure the timely and effective deployment of international resources to assist firefighting, mitigate land and forest fires, and control smoke pollution.

ASEAN is also working on the *Study on the Economic, Health and Social Impact of Haze*

*in 2015 on the ASEAN Region* to assess the effect of the 2015 haze on ASEAN and enable countries to have a baseline economic, health and social data to understand the impact of transboundary haze.

### Gearing up for a dynamic ASEAN

ASEAN is collaborating to build an innovative community that is a proactive member of the global community. Key programmes and activities have been implemented, including the Recognition Ceremony of Olympic and Paralympic ASEAN Athletes on 30 November 2016 in Jakarta. This event paid tribute to all ASEAN athletes participating at the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Other youth programmes are being implemented to foster youth involvement, such as the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme (AYVP), the ASEAN Young



**The future leaders of ASEAN**



#### Caring for people in need

Leaders Summit, the ASEAN Youth Professionals Volunteer Corps, and the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI).

ASEAN also maximises the use of different media to reach out to its peoples and enhance awareness of ASEAN. Projects such as *ASEAN Television News: Integrates, Informs, and Inspires*, and the *Voice of ASEAN: Beyond Boundaries* for radio, have facilitated the exchange of news and features programmes about ASEAN Member States, spreading ASEAN information to audiences across the region. Importantly, a priority in the ASEAN information sector is the programme to build the discernment of young people in consuming information and generating content on social media platforms.

In the culture sector, more projects are being carried out to enhance inter-cultural understanding

among the peoples of ASEAN. These include the *Workshop on ASEAN Textiles* which focused on the rich art of batik-making found all over the region, and the *Learning from Cultural Experts* project where experts impart the knowledge and skills of making *batik* and playing the *angklung* (a traditional bamboo musical instrument) to young participants.

In the labour sector, various initiatives are on-going to promote the competitiveness of ASEAN workforce. The biennial ASEAN Skills Competition concluded its 11<sup>th</sup> edition in September 2016 in Serdang, Malaysia with 276 TVET students participating in 23 skills area such as welding, electronics, IT software and network system, graphic design technology, restaurant service, beauty therapy and mobile robotics. The Competition and side events attracted 127,500 visitors.

The ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM) continued its pivotal role in promoting not only a high performing, dynamic and citizen-centric civil service, but also ASEAN community building efforts. This is achieved through the implementation of various initiatives in the ACCSM Work Plan 2016-2020 such as ASEAN Leaders in Governance and Public Administration Programme in October 2016 in Singapore. In addition, ten ASEAN Resource Centres (ARCs) are delivering various capacity building programmes to support civil service competency, leadership, quality of public service delivery, and public service reform public service reform.

## **Enhancing Collaboration on Community Building and Cross-cutting Issues**

To promote coordination on cross-cutting and community building issues, the ASCC has actively engaged all its sectoral bodies at the meetings of the Coordinating Conference on the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (SOC-COM), the ASEAN Coordinating Conference for the ASEAN Political-Security Community (ASCCO), and the Committee of the Whole for the ASEAN Economic Community (COW). These coordination efforts have created a synergy across the various sectors and pillars. Examples include the setting up of the Task Force on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community. The task force is a joint undertaking by the ASEAN Intergovernmental



Caring for the entire ecological system including animal health

Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN 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).

ASEAN has also undertaken activities to enhance synergy between ASEAN Visions 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thailand, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the ASEAN Secretariat are developing a joint report on the “Complementarities Initiative”, which will be unveiled at the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit in November 2017. The initiative’s “Culture of Prevention”, a broad cross-cutting agenda, aims to supplement the ASCC sectoral bodies’

Work Plans (2016-2020) with a more coordinated and systematic approach. It promotes respect, tolerance, culture of peace, human rights and lawfulness. It also contributes to preventing various forms of violence, including violent extremism, criminality, drug use and trafficking, as well as violence against women and children.

### **ASCC Celebrates Golden Anniversary of ASEAN**

ASCC activities are in full swing to celebrate ASEAN's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Several high-profile initiatives were held this year. These include the





#### **ASEAN youth showing their optimism**

First ASEAN University Student Council Union Conference, held in Hiroshima and Tokyo on 14-20 March 2017 which gathered student leaders across ASEAN and Japan to exchange on the theme: Peace and Youth Leadership.

Other special and commemorative events will also be held in light of the priorities of ASEAN such as the 7<sup>th</sup> High-Level Cross Regional Roundtable on Violence against Children, ASEAN Conference on Nutrition and Breastfeeding + “Hakab Na”<sup>1)</sup> 2017, the ASEAN High-Level Conference on Social Protection, and the Traditional Medicine Conference – Milestone Achievements on T&CM<sup>2)</sup> of AMS.

The message of multi-culturalism in ASEAN will be carried through the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts, one of the regional cultural events to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN in 2017.

The performance will bring together traditional and contemporary performers – in music, dance, and theatre – from all over the region to capture the spirit, dynamism, and cultural complexity of ASEAN.

For the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN, the information sector held the Forum on Maximising ASEAN National TV Networks in Support of ASEAN Integration and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN in January 2017. Led by the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI), it paved the way for national TV stations to collaborate in boosting ASEAN’s image during its golden anniversary. The COCI is also preparing the ASEAN@50: Historic Milestones, a series of TV advertorials and promotional plugs in highlighting the historical evolution of ASEAN over the last 50 years and how these landmark ASEAN events affect the lives of ASEAN people.

<sup>1</sup> Latch on in English

<sup>2</sup> Traditional and Complementary Medicine

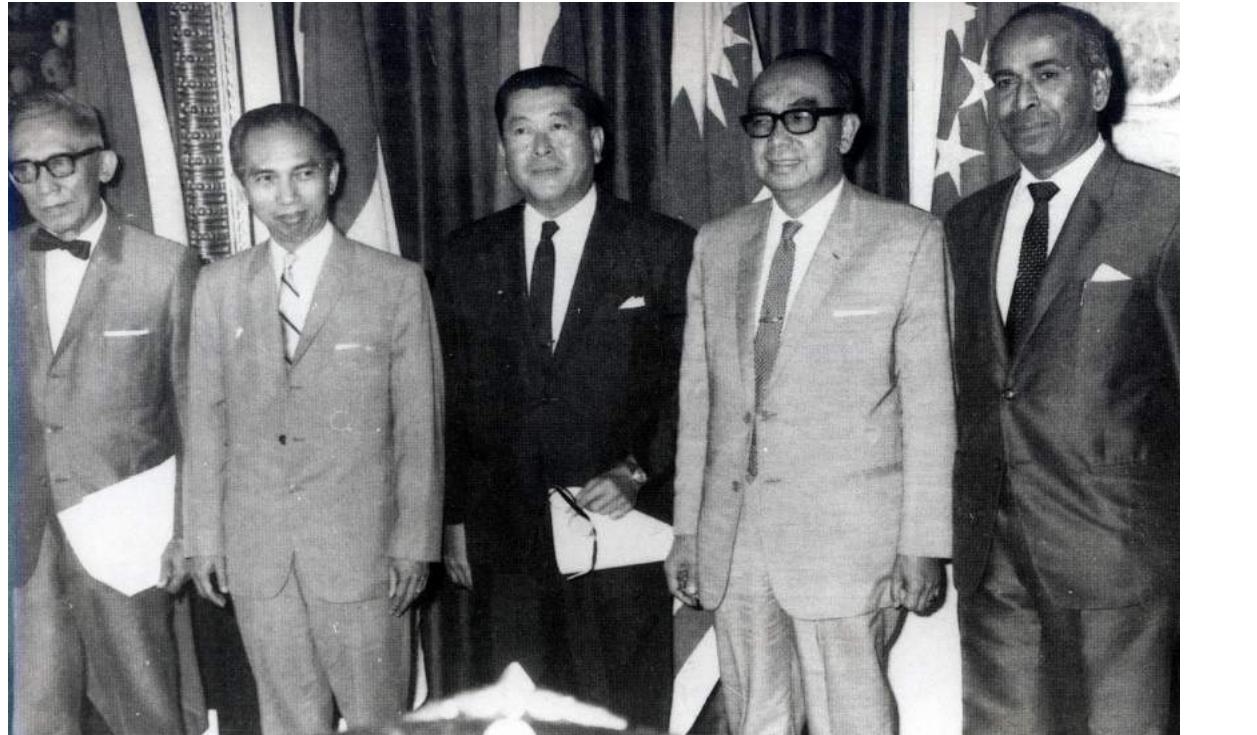
# **ASEAN Milestones**



1967



Signing of the Bangkok (ASEAN) Declaration, 8 August 1967



The Founding Fathers of ASEAN

1976  
1st ASEAN SUMMIT





The vision for ASEAN Community was born, 1997



The three pillars of ASEAN Community were identified at Bali Concord II, 2003



Establishment of ASEAN Community was accelerated, 2007



The ASEAN Charter was signed, 2007



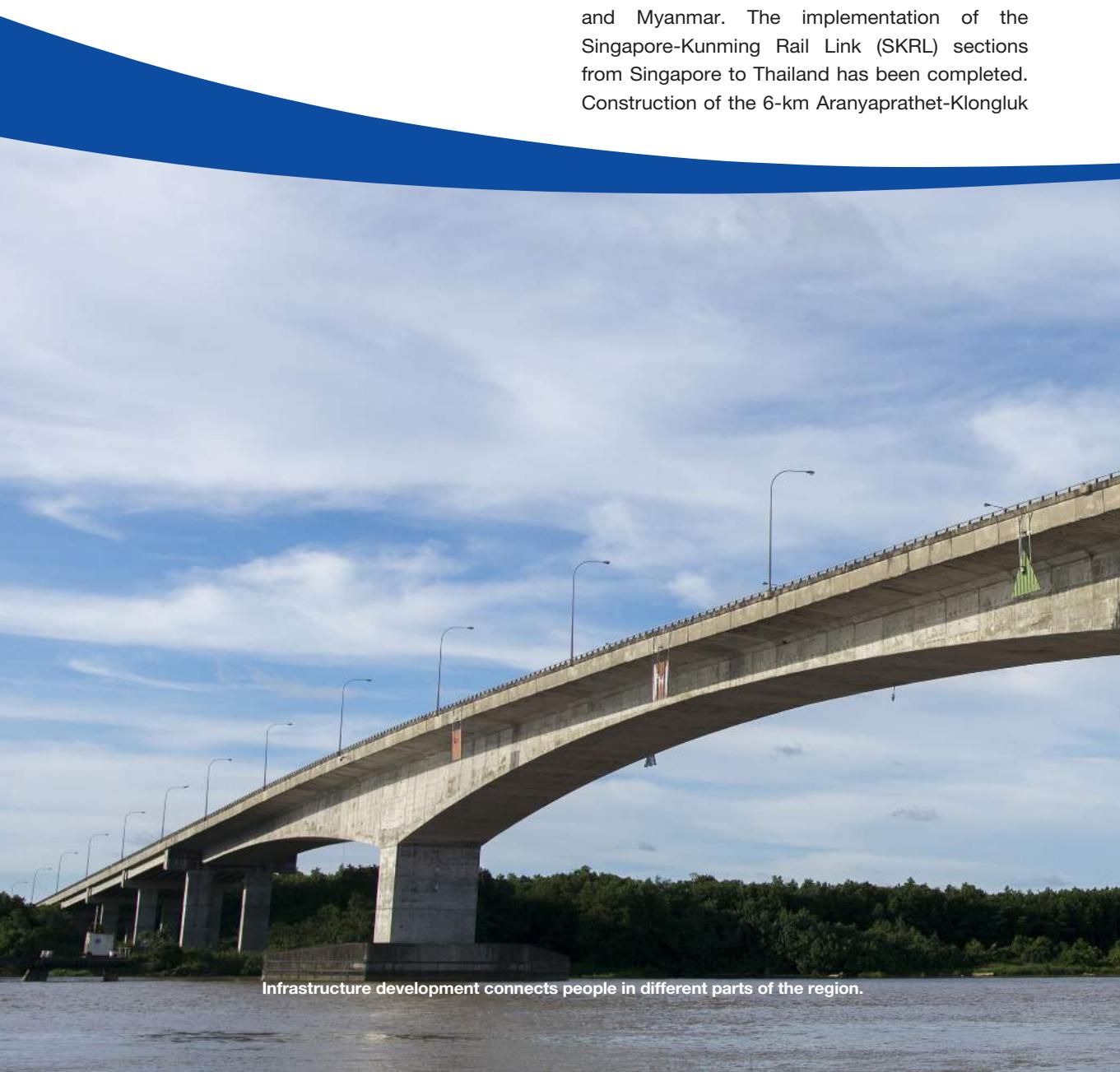
The ASEAN Community was declared, 2015

# ASEAN Connectivity

**A**SEAN leaders recognise the importance of connecting the community and have been working to enhance ASEAN Connectivity through three main dimensions – physical, institutional and people-to-people. The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2010 has been adopted as a cross-pillar and cross-sectoral initiative to intensify and strengthen the ASEAN Community building effort.

## Achievements of MPAC 2010

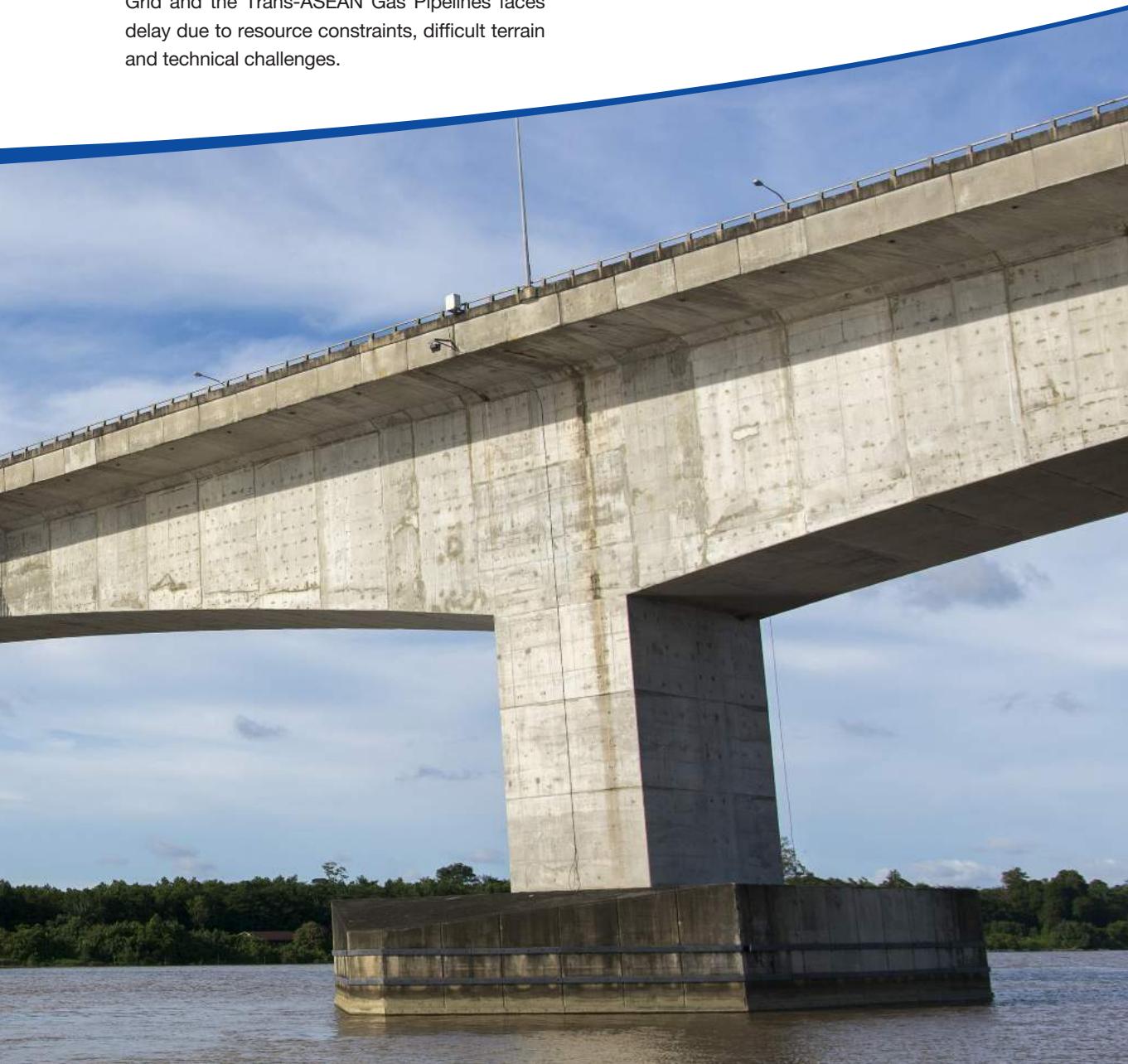
Since its adoption in October 2010, considerable progress has been made in implementing MPAC 2010. The ASEAN Highway Network (AHN) is moving forward even though there remain 4 sections that are still being upgraded to at least “Class III” roads within ASEAN’s designated Transit Transport Routes (TTRs) in Lao PDR and Myanmar. The implementation of the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) sections from Singapore to Thailand has been completed. Construction of the 6-km Aranyaprathet-Klongluk



Infrastructure development connects people in different parts of the region.

railway track in Thailand and a railway bridge was completed in August 2015. Financing is being sought for SKRL sections in Cambodia, Viet Nam and Lao PDR. Indonesia and the Philippines launched the Bitung–General Santos–Davao Roll-On Roll-Off (RORO) shipping route in Davao City on 30 April 2017. The Neak Loeung Bridge was opened in April 2015. The West Kalimantan–Sarawak power interconnection project has been completed in January 2016 with electricity supply of 50 MW and is to be increased to 230 MW. However, the implementation of other energy interconnection projects under the ASEAN Power Grid and the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipelines faces delay due to resource constraints, difficult terrain and technical challenges.

Efforts to implement the three transport facilitation agreements – the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit (AFAFGIT), the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation on Inter-State Transport (AFAFIST), and the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Multimodal Transport (AFAMT) – are continuing and include the completion of protocols relevant to these agreements. All ASEAN Member States have ratified the agreements and protocols to develop the ASEAN Single Aviation Market, namely, the Multilateral Agreement on the Full Liberalisation of Air Freight



Services (MAFLAFS), the Multilateral Agreement on Air Services (MAAS) and the Multilateral Agreement on the Full Liberalisation of Passenger Air Services (MAFLPAS). The implementation frameworks for the ASEAN Single Aviation Market and the ASEAN Single Shipping Market have been adopted. Trade facilitation measures are being undertaken to achieve free flow of goods and services. And five exchange-ready ASEAN Member States; Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam; have been exchanging the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) Form D since April 2016.

The ASEAN Virtual Learning Resource Centre; a new media platform focusing on ASEAN's peoples, cultures, and youth education; has been operating since 2015. The ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook (for primary and secondary schools) was developed in 2012, and ASEAN has been promoting its use to supplement existing materials on ASEAN studies in schools. The

ASEAN Studies Course is being implemented under the ASEAN University Network for undergraduate students to further promote the study of ASEAN among youth.

The report *Enhancing ASEAN Connectivity Monitoring and Evaluation* was released in 2016. It assessed the progress and achievements made in the MPAC 2010, drawing policy implications and outlining lessons for the future. Since the implementation of the MPAC 2025 is one of ASEAN's priorities, this report is a useful guide for a more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism that includes production and collection of robust data, development of indicators and assessment of impact.

### **The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025**

In September 2016, ASEAN leaders adopted the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025



at the 28<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR. They recognised that resource mobilisation, coordination and translating regional initiatives at the national level were implementation challenges for MPAC 2010. Thus, MPAC 2025 was developed with an emphasis on coordination and implementation arrangements. It focuses on five strategic areas – sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility – and 15 corresponding key initiatives.

The ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) Consultation on Connectivity with Dialogue Partners was convened in October 2016 where Dialogue Partners reaffirmed their commitment to support the implementation of MPAC 2025 and discussed future areas of cooperation. The 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium with the theme “Intensifying Partnerships to Realise the MPAC 2025” was also held to present MPAC 2025 to all

stakeholders – relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, Dialogue Partners, as well as private sector and international organisations – and to discuss partnerships and support for its implementation.

Given the emphasis on implementation arrangements, the terms of reference for the ACCC, the National Coordinators, the National Focal Points and the Lead Implementing Body for Sustainable Infrastructure were revised, developed and subsequently adopted at the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting in April 2017 in Manila, the Philippines. The identification and designation of representatives to these bodies will be completed in due course.

To foster greater understanding of implementation roles and engender ownership, the ACCC reached out to various stakeholders and leading implementation bodies to discuss key initiatives and issues related to the implementation of MPAC 2025. Communication products and tools for the general public are being developed to raise awareness and understanding of MPAC 2025 through videos, sound bites and web pages.

The ACCC will hold a Forum on MPAC 2025 Initiatives and Project Concepts to discuss details of key initiatives and translate them into implementation packages. The forum will also discuss the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium, which will present MPAC 2025 to relevant stakeholders, as well as discuss its implementation process, outputs and outcomes.

With MPAC 2010 having made great achievements and MPAC 2025 now in place, ASEAN continues to forge cooperation, collaboration and partnership that will enhance connectivity and improve the lives of the peoples of all ASEAN Member States.





# The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI)

The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III was adopted at the 28<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit on 6 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The vision of this work plan remains consistent with preceding plans: to assist Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) to meet ASEAN-wide targets and commitments for realising the goals of the ASEAN Community. The work plan spans over 2016-2020 and focuses on five strategic areas: food and agriculture, trade facilitation, MSMEs, education, and health and well-being. Compared to past work plans, the IAI Work Plan III contains a more robust performance-tracking system to measure the achievement and effectiveness of implementation.

IAI projects are chiefly aimed at assisting CLMV countries to enhance the knowledge and understanding of their officials on specific areas, equip or upgrade needed facilities and train officials for effective implementation at the national level. They also provide guidance on the development or amendment of national legislations so that they are consistent with regional commitments. These activities include

attachment programmes for CLMV junior officials at the ASEAN Secretariat; training of CLM inspectors on Good Agriculture Practices (guidelines and inspection methods); supporting the establishment of accreditation services in CLM countries; funding additional participants from CLMV countries to attend the MRA Master Trainers/Assessors for tour operators training; and reviewing the drafts of national nursing regulations, including licensing and registration of healthcare professionals in CLMV countries, to name a few.

Besides assisting CLMV governments, IAI projects also support the development of SMEs in CLMV countries, particularly to enhance business-to-business (B2B) network of SMEs in the tourism sector. The activities include joint marketing efforts and participation of selected tour operators in the ASEAN Ecotourism Forum at Pakse, Lao PDR in June 2016 and the ITB Asia, Asia's leading travel trade show, in Singapore in October 2016. SMEs not only obtained new business contacts through such activities but also learned to collaborate with other SMEs to increase their competitiveness in the global market.

# The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN

**O**n 8 August 1967, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand gathered in Bangkok to sign a declaration establishing an “Association for Regional Cooperation among the countries of Southeast Asia to be known as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)”.

That document, now known as the Bangkok Declaration, marked the birth of ASEAN.

The five signatories of the Bangkok Declaration – Adam Malik of Indonesia, Narciso R. Ramos of the Philippines, Tun Abdul Razak of Malaysia, S. Rajaratnam of Singapore, and Thanat Khoman of Thailand – are considered as “ASEAN’s Founding Fathers”.

Since then, ASEAN has grown to become a 10-member grouping, with Brunei Darussalam joining in 1984, Viet Nam in 1995, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999. Today, ASEAN is widely



recognised as one of the world's most successful regional organisations.

ASEAN celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of community building in 2017. To mark this milestone, ASEAN, under the chairmanship of the Philippines, has created numerous commemorative activities at both regional and national levels. Besides paying homage to the landmark moment and saluting key actors who founded ASEAN, the commemorative activities also aim to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the region, and the ingenuity and heroic acts of its people which have transformed this region into a zone of peace, stability, prosperity and friendship.

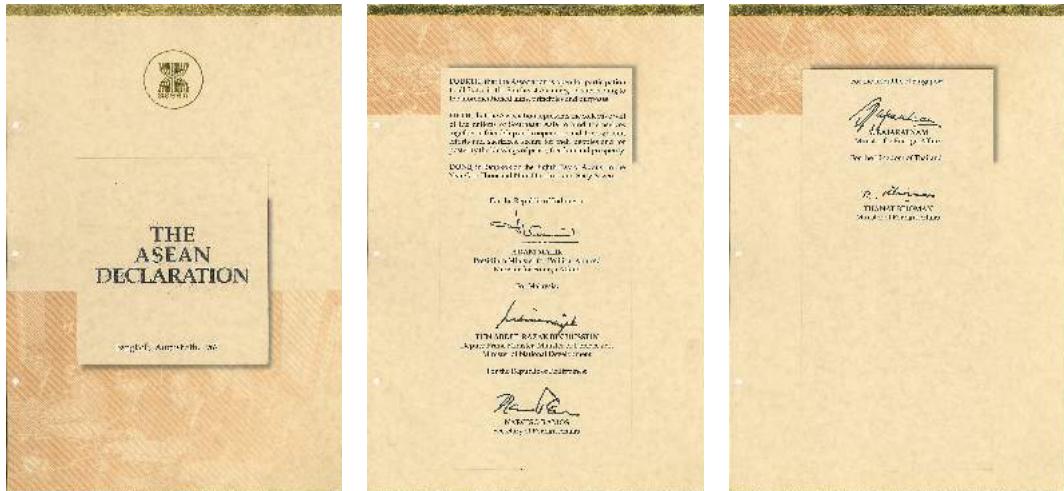
The official logo of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN is used in all promotional materials by ASEAN Member States (AMS), ASEAN

Secretariat, entities associated with ASEAN and external partners granted permission to use it.

As the ASEAN Chair, the Philippines is taking the lead in organising regional commemorative activities which include (i) Tribute to the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, (ii) ASEAN Youth Social Entrepreneurship Award, and (iii) ASEAN Heroes of Biodiversity. Under the tribute project, the ASEAN Secretariat is producing a commemorative video together with a TV ad to be shown in all AMS. Outstanding youth social entrepreneurs and champions of biodiversity from the region will be recognised at a grand celebration on 8 August 2017 in Manila.

At the national level, ASEAN Member States are expected to implement some common activities such as: (i) ASEAN Landmark Lighting (ii) ASEAN Street Festivals and (iii) various forums on ASEAN.





Some ASEAN Member States also have their own plans to engage their citizens in commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN.

In conjunction with the Golden Jubilee, many ASEAN sectoral bodies have also planned events that illustrate the depth and breadth of ASEAN's community building initiatives. These events include those organised by:

- ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR): Youth Debate on Human Rights 2017 – "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN: Forging ahead together toward a Sustainable Community"
- ASEAN Disability Forum (ADF): Launch of the Regional Action Plan on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disability in the ASEAN Community
- ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection: Production of an ASEAN@50 commemorative video on consumer education

The celebration of ASEAN's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is also widely embraced by Dialogue Partners, who

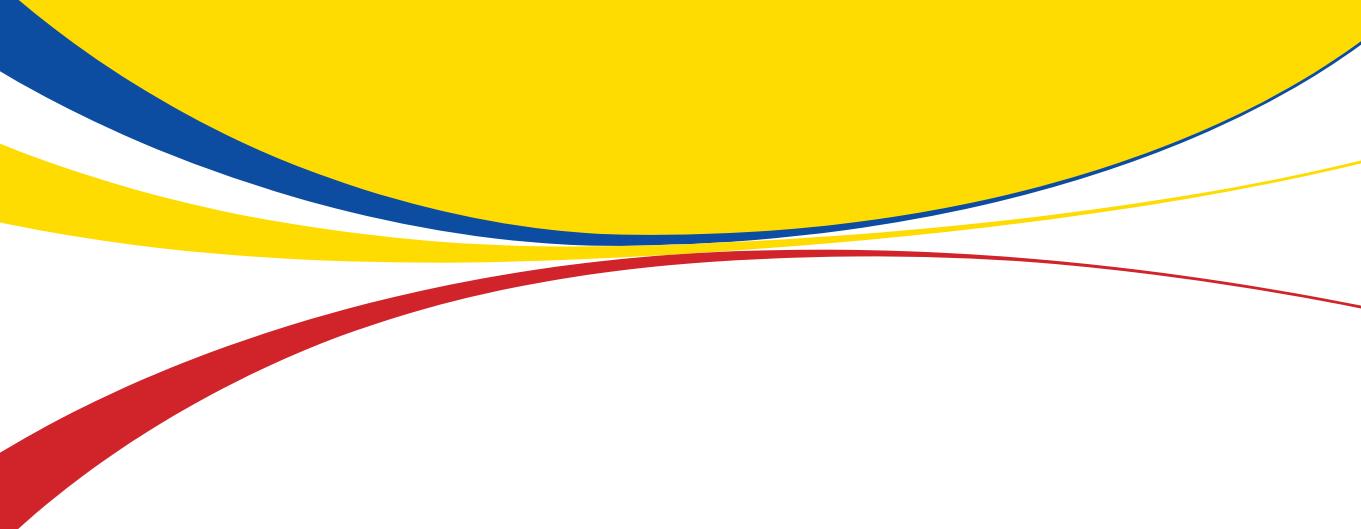
have organised various events to commemorate ASEAN's golden anniversary. One such event was the inaugural EU-ASEAN Run, held on 7 May 2017, which attracted 1,700 runners in Jakarta. Also in the pipeline is the ASEAN-China Car Rally that would flag off in Nanning, China, and race through all ten ASEAN Member States. Cultural events and food bazaars will also be held in the region to bring ASEAN closer to the masses.

The ASEAN Secretariat is working with two international publishers (WORLDEI and the Lowndes Group) on two commemorative publications chronicling ASEAN's history and growth. These publications are to be completed in the second half of 2017. Senior Indonesian officials and Jakarta's diplomatic community will attend the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN at the Secretariat on 11 August 2017. The public will also be invited to the open-house carnival in the afternoon.

Befittingly, the commemoration of ASEAN's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is characterised by remembrance and celebration of the association's achievements in building a truly people-centred and people-oriented community.

# **ANNEX**

## **ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY**



## I. ASEAN POLITICAL COOPERATION

### ASEAN Community Building

1. Last year bore witness to unpredictable changes in the global landscape, including the rise of populism, protectionism, and increasing threats from terrorism and violent extremism. Amidst these and a rising trend worldwide against globalisation and integration, ASEAN has nevertheless committed to building a strong, united, and resilient ASEAN community. Thus, the need to promote ASEAN integration and ensure that all levels of society benefit from the ASEAN Community is more important than ever. Raising awareness of the people on ASEAN initiatives and programmes remains essential to win their support for all community building efforts. Economic resilience, inclusive growth and greater connectivity are important elements in the community building process to enable ASEAN to cope with new challenges and uncertainties.

### Strengthening ASEAN Institutions

2. Strengthening institutional capacity remains an indispensable element in the ASEAN Community building agenda. For the past year, the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and the ASEAN Secretariat, have been implementing the recommendations of the High Level Task Force (HLTF) on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs. Notable achievements have been made to streamline ASEAN work processes, improve coordination among sectoral bodies, expand ASEAN's external relations and strengthen the operations of the ASEAN Secretariat. Although all of the recommendations have been effected, most of them are perpetual in nature and

will be continuously implemented in accordance with ASEAN processes and practices, without a definite timeline.

### ASEAN Centrality

3. Ensuring ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture continues to be an important task. In the past year, ASEAN Member States have made efforts to adopt a collective response to regional and international challenges and project a common voice and position on issues of concern. ASEAN's central role in ASEAN-led mechanisms has been upheld. Apart from regular meetings, special meetings were also convened in the face of important developments/events affecting the security situation in the region. These included the Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kunming in June 2016 and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in December 2016. An Informal ASEAN SOM was also held in December 2016 in the face of changes in global politics. A number of statements were issued on matters of mutual concern to project a common ASEAN position, such as on the situation in the Korean peninsula and the commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in 2017.

### The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation

4. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation remains the key code of conduct governing inter-state relations and the foundation for maintaining peace and stability in the region. The TAC is an important instrument for ASEAN to promote its central role in the evolving regional architecture and its validity has been strongly reaffirmed in the current world context. An increasing number of countries around the world are expressing interest in acceding to TAC. In 2016, Egypt, Morocco

and Chile acceded to the treaty and ASEAN is currently considering new requests.

### **The South East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty**

5. ASEAN is fully committed to preserving South East Asia as a region free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In a changing security landscape with complex unfolding developments involving nuclear and chemical weapons, ASEAN needs to redouble its efforts to promote disarmament, non-proliferation and capacity building in the areas of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. In this regard, talks continue with the Nuclear Weapon States for their accession to the protocol that pledges respect for the SEANWFZ Treaty. ASEAN is also working to raise the profile of SEANWFZ at international forums and enhance cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

### **South China Sea**

6. The South China Sea continues to draw the attention of the international community. ASEAN has worked closely with China towards the full and effective implementation of the Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and an early conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). The ASEAN-China Post Ministerial Conference in Vientiane adopted a joint statement on the full and effective implementation of DOC last year. Two early harvest measures; namely the Guidelines for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFAs') Hotline in Response to Maritime Emergencies, and the Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea; are being operationalised to enhance trust and confidence among parties. Practical

maritime cooperation activities and projects in numerous areas, including environmental protection, scientific research and natural disaster mitigation are being implemented to bring concrete maritime benefits to our people. Officials from ASEAN and China have worked intensively since the beginning of this year and completed the negotiation of the draft COC framework. This draft COC framework will be submitted to the Foreign Ministers during the ASEAN-China Post Ministerial Conference in August 2017 in the Philippines for their consideration.

## **II. ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION**

### **Transnational Crime/Non-Traditional Security Issues**

7. On 8 March 2017, the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) entered into force in the six countries that had ratified it – Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar and the Philippines. Lao PDR submitted its instrument of ratification on 16 May. An ASEAN-wide, cross-sectoral work plan called the “Bohol TIP Work Plan 2017-2020” is currently being developed. It will coordinate implementation of the ACTIP and its corresponding ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (APA). Nine relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Organs are involved in the work plan to ensure that the ACTIP and APA benefit the people of ASEAN through prevention of the crime, proper criminal justice responses and protection of the victims.
8. In a concerted effort to address the recent jump in the irregular movement of persons in Southeast Asia, ASEAN adopted the “Terms of Reference of the Trust Fund to Support Emergency Humanitarian and Relief Efforts in the Event of the Irregular Movement of

Persons in Southeast Asia” in July 2016. The contributions and pledges of ASEAN Member States to the Trust Fund currently stand at USD 850,000.

## **Border Management and Immigration**

9. In the spirit of forging a people-oriented and people-centred community, ASEAN is developing the Guidelines on Consular Assistance by ASEAN Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of ASEAN Member States to help our citizens when they are outside the region. Additionally, this effort was further strengthened with the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the Ad Hoc Working Group on ASEAN Common Visa in September 2016 to study the feasibility of developing an ASEAN Common Visa.
10. Cross-sectoral cooperation on border management between two forums – the Senior Officials Meetings on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and the Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM) – is being carried out through the EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme II. The programme aims to enhance the skills and capabilities of ASEAN law enforcement and immigration officers in border control activities to ensure the security of the region from the threat and dangers posed by transnational syndicates.

## **Combat Against Illicit Drugs**

11. It has been a significant year for ASEAN, which has been putting great efforts to prevent, suppress and eliminate the scourge of drugs and realise its aspiration for a Drug-Free ASEAN. The delivery of a joint ASEAN Statement at the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs in Vienna, Austria, and at the United Nations General

Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem in New York, USA, by Singapore and Malaysia in March and April 2016, respectively, represented ASEAN’s clear expression of a zero-tolerance policy against drug abuse.

12. The ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report was launched in August last year to sound alarm bells on regional drug problems and to establish information networks in the region. At its fifth meeting in Singapore, the ASEAN Ministers responsible for drug matters adopted the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025. It details ASEAN’s 10-year plan to address illicit drug activities and mitigate its consequences on society. In the same vein, the theme of “Securing ASEAN Communities Against Illicit Drugs” was also adopted. As an expression of ASEAN unity on the issue, the ministers also launched the green-and-white Anti-Drug Abuse Ribbon to raise greater awareness and to campaign and spread a common message on the need to be resilient against illegal drug use, particularly by youth, throughout the region. ASEAN is also developing a Cooperation Plan to mitigate the danger posed by illicit drug production and trafficking in the Golden Triangle.

## **Defence and Security Cooperation**

13. ASEAN defence cooperation aims to tackle regional security challenges and enhance preparedness to better mitigate security threats to the region. Security incidents and natural disasters that took place throughout the past year have prompted the defence sector to take a variety of actions to augment their capacity and capabilities. Last year, the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP)

- was finally completed with the adoption of Chapter VI on the Use of ASEAN Military Assets and Capacities in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). The complete SASOP will allow a more concerted and coordinated disaster relief operation, which will eventually expedite ASEAN's response to such calamities. At the operational level, a Military Medicine-HADR Joint Exercise (AMHEX 2016) was held in Chonburi Province, Thailand, and successfully brought together approximately 2000 personnel from the eighteen ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) countries and regional as well as international organisations to strengthen coordination and communication in the wake of a disaster.
14. The establishment of the ASEAN Defence Communications Infrastructure (ADI), previously known as the Direct Communications Link (DCL), is making progress. Once in place, the ADI will allow any two ASEAN defence ministers to communicate directly through a secure channel in the event of crises and emergencies, particularly in relation to maritime security.
15. The defence sector envisions that the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025 will from this year onwards provide it with more streamlined processes and improved coordination in working with other ASEAN sectoral bodies to manage the available resources and deliver upon their assigned tasks.
16. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) continues to be an important platform for discussion of pertinent security issues in the region. In 2016, the 23<sup>rd</sup> ARF adopted three important statements: the ARF Statement on Strengthening Cooperation in the Management of Cross-Border Movement of Criminals, the ARF Ministerial Statement on Enhancing Cooperation among Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies and the ARF Ministerial Statement on Recent Tragic Terrorist Attacks. All of them reflect the ARF's commitment to continue contributing towards peace and security in the region.
17. As part of its commitment to strengthen confidence building measures and move towards preventive diplomacy, the ARF implemented a total of twenty-three initiatives in the inter-sessional year 2016-2017. Given the increasing challenges in the international security realm, these initiatives addressed the key issues of prevention of violent extremism, trafficking in persons, preventive diplomacy, management of marine hazards and disaster response. In addition, the ARF Annual Security Outlook received twenty submissions in the inter-sessional year 2016-2017, the highest number of contributions received since the ARF's inception.
18. Looking forward, the ARF will further strengthen cooperation with other sectoral bodies to ensure ARF activities complement the activities of other ASEAN-led mechanisms, while at the same time advancing confidence-building measures and the development of preventive diplomacy.
- ### **III. ASEAN HUMAN RIGHTS COOPERATION**
19. The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) works to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in the ASEAN Community. In 2016, it convened the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, focusing on education, employment and accessible health services. This was followed by the AICHR Training Programme on the Rights of Persons with

- Disabilities. The AICHR also established a Task Force to draft the Regional Action Plan on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community which will be completed by the end of 2017. In this endeavour, the AICHR is collaborating with 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) from the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) pillar. This marks the first cross-pillar collaboration on disability rights.
20. In 2017, the AICHR convened its first AICHR Judicial Colloquium on the Sharing of Good Practices Regarding International Human Rights Law. The event saw high-level participation from senior judges and officials from the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM) as well as from relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. The colloquium allowed participants to share good practices, discuss the challenges they faced in the implementation of international human rights laws, and work to strengthen judicial co-operation among relevant stakeholders.
21. The AICHR also continues to strengthen its cross-sectoral collaboration with the Senior Officials Meetings on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) to mainstream a human rights-based approach in the implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) and the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (APA). It held the first AICHR-SOMTC Consultation on Human Rights-based Approach in the Implementation of ACTIP and APA in 2016. It was a follow-up of a joint AICHR-SOMTC workshop on the application of rights-based approaches in the implementation of ACTIP, which was held in 2015. The second Consultation will be convened in the later part of 2017.
22. As of April 2017, the AICHR has granted 16 civil society organisations (CSOs) the status of Consultative Relationship with the Commission in accordance with the Guidelines on the AICHR's Relations with CSOs.
- #### **IV. ASEAN EXTERNAL RELATIONS**
23. ASEAN's relations with Dialogue Partners and external partners have been fortified and deepened in the past one year through bolstering the existing frameworks and implementing the Plans of Action that are in line with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. There will be further momentum to strengthen the partnerships this year as ASEAN celebrates five commemorative anniversaries: the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of Dialogue Relations with Canada, EU and the US; the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dialogue Relations with India; and the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation.
- ASEAN continues to refine its central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture so that it is inclusive, effective and rules-based. It is built on ASEAN-led processes such as the ASEAN Plus One and ASEAN Plus Three mechanisms, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus (ADMM Plus). In addition, ASEAN is reaching out to potential partners as an increased number of countries and international organisations have expressed interest in forging formal partnership with ASEAN. To date, 88 Non-ASEAN Ambassadors have been accredited to ASEAN. The group has also established 52 ASEAN Committees in Third Countries to assist in coordinating and facilitating ASEAN matters and to

promote ASEAN's profile in their respective host countries and organisations.

### **ASEAN-Australia**

24. The First ASEAN-Australia Biennial Summit, held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, adopted a renewed ASEAN-Australia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, which will redouble collaborative efforts to fight the threats of terrorism, extremism and radicalism. An ASEAN-Australia Special Summit is scheduled for 17-18 March 2018 in Sydney, Australia. To prepare for the Special Summit, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) visited Australia on 27 May-3 June 2017.
25. Australia has been actively promoting cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms in areas such as counter-terrorism, maritime security and disaster response. Combating trafficking in persons remains a key area of collaboration between the two sides with activities being undertaken under the Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP).
26. Australia continues to support ASEAN's economic integration through the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Phase II and the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Area (FTA) Economic Cooperation Support Programme.
27. ASEAN and Australia have intensified people-to-people links especially in education. The Australia Awards and Endeavour scholarships have sponsored 944 students from ASEAN Member States to study and undertake professional development in Australia in 2016. Australia is also working to align its regional priorities with the ASEAN Work Plan on

Education 2016-2020, which includes quality assurance, qualifications recognition, and tertiary and vocational education training.

### **ASEAN-Canada**

28. ASEAN and Canada are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations in 2017. Commemorative events and activities are being held throughout the year to celebrate the milestone.
29. On economic and trade relations, the Economic Ministers of ASEAN and Canada, at their Fifth Consultations on 4 August 2016, agreed to launch a trade policy dialogue and conduct a feasibility study for a potential ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Cooperation on energy security has also been strengthened through Canada's two-year (March 2016 to March 2018) support to the ASEAN Centre for Energy.
30. Under the socio-cultural front, Canada continues to support the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme through the ASEAN Integrated Disaster Risk Management Fund (2013-2017). Canada also actively supports ASEAN's efforts to promote and protect the rights of women, children and migrant workers in the region through a number of projects.

### **ASEAN-China**

31. ASEAN and China celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dialogue Relations in 2016 with a series of commemorative activities including a Commemorative Summit in September 2016 in Vientiane.
32. The two sides further strengthened their economic relations by upgrading the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement through the

- Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation and Certain Agreements thereunder between ASEAN and China. The protocol, which entered into force on 1 July 2016, is expected to contribute towards achieving two-way trade and investment of USD 1 trillion and USD 150 billion respectively by 2020.
33. Cooperation in socio-cultural areas has been further enhanced. Various activities were implemented under the ASEAN-China Year of Educational Exchanges in 2016 to promote student exchange and people-to-people contacts. The ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Cooperation 2016-2020 was endorsed in June 2016.
34. The year 2017 has been designated the ASEAN-China Year of Tourism Cooperation to further boost growth in two-way tourist visits and people-to-people exchange. A series of events and activities will be organised in ASEAN Member States and China during the year.
35. With regard to the South China Sea, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China adopted in July 2016 a Joint Statement on the Full and Effective Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC). The 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Summit in September 2016 adopted the Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea in the South China Sea, and the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the DOC. Official consultations on a Code of Conduct (COC) are being intensified to meet the target of completing a COC framework by mid-2017.
36. This year ASEAN and the EU are commemorating their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dialogue Relations. Both sides are working towards a strategic partnership by strengthening cooperation across the three pillars of the ASEAN Community.
37. Noting the potential for enhancing trade between the two regions, the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the EU Trade Commissioner, at their 15<sup>th</sup> Consultation on 10 March 2017, launched formal region-to-region talks to agree on a framework setting out the parameters for a future ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement. ASEAN and the EU have also made progress in negotiating the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, to further enhance strategic connectivity between and beyond ASEAN and the EU.
38. ASEAN and the EU launched two new programmes in March 2017 to further strengthen ASEAN-EU cooperation in environmental protection and sustainable development, namely the Sustainable Use of Peatland and Haze Mitigation in ASEAN, and the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN.
39. ASEAN and the EU have made good progress in implementing various cooperation programmes in the areas of border management, monitoring and statistics, intellectual property rights, higher education, emergency management, and human rights.
- ASEAN-India**
40. ASEAN and India are celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations in 2017. Commemorative events and activities are being held throughout the year

- to celebrate the milestone. An ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit is scheduled for January 2018 in India.
41. India has been actively promoting cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms in areas such as counter-terrorism, transnational crimes and military medicine.
  42. At their 13<sup>th</sup> Consultations on 6 August 2016, the Economic Ministers of ASEAN and the Minister of Commerce and Industry of India reiterated the importance of implementing the ASEAN-India Trade in Services and Investment Agreements, which will help to elevate ASEAN-India relations to a strategic partnership. The ministers encouraged all parties to ratify these agreements.
  43. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) will be signed at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference Plus One Session with India in August 2017 in the Philippines. The AIC will serve as a platform to promote cooperation in various areas and help strengthen the ASEAN-India partnership.
  44. ASEAN and India have started discussion on a Maritime Transport Agreement to further advance cooperation and facilitation of maritime passenger and cargo transport. They aim to conclude the agreement together with the ASEAN-India Air Transport Agreement.
  45. ASEAN and Japan continue to strengthen their cooperation through the implementation of the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. The implementation plan for this is being revised to reflect new developments including the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.
  46. Political-security cooperation has been reinforced to address non-traditional security issues. ASEAN and Japan are conducting activities under the SOMTC-Japan Work Plan (2015-2017) to implement the 2014 ASEAN-Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime. The two sides are already discussing development of a successor five-year Work Plan to continue this cooperation.
  47. Substantive progress has been made under the ASEAN-Japan 10-Year Strategic Economic Cooperation Roadmap, which was renewed in 2016 to take into account the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. The renewed roadmap focuses on strengthening bilateral economic cooperation, supporting ASEAN economic integration and enhancing cooperation for integrating the region into the global economy.
  48. Both sides continue to promote two-way trade and investment through the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement. Negotiations on the chapters on Trade in Services and Movement of Natural Persons as well as on the Investment Chapter of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement have been concluded. The two sides are working to incorporate the outcomes of the negotiations into the AJCEP Agreement.
  49. ASEAN and Japan continue to emphasise people-to-people engagements and cultural exchanges to promote friendship and mutual understanding. Following the successful implementation of the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) 2016, JENESYS 2017 was launched by Japan.

## **ASEAN-Japan**

45. ASEAN and Japan continue to strengthen their cooperation through the implementation of the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. The implementation plan for this is being revised to reflect new developments including the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

## **ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK)**

50. ASEAN-ROK political-security cooperation is continually developed through existing mechanisms, including the dialogue on security-related issues at the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-ROK Dialogue in June 2016.
51. Both sides are working to maximise the benefits of the ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Agreement to reach a total trade target of USD 200 billion by 2020. The Third Protocol to Amend the ASEAN-Korea Trade in Goods Agreement, which was signed in November 2015, has entered into force in six ASEAN Member States and the ROK. The remaining ASEAN Member States are working on their domestic procedures to allow for adoption of the protocol.
52. ASEAN and the ROK are stepping up cooperation to address transnational and emerging challenges, particularly climate change and disaster management. Various projects and activities are being implemented under the ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation Agreement. Preparation for the establishment of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organisation is underway.
53. Cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchange has become a priority with the launch of the ASEAN-ROK Cultural Exchange Year 2017. Numerous activities are being implemented throughout the year, including the launch of the ASEAN Culture House in Busan in September 2017 to raise awareness of ASEAN culture in the ROK.
55. New Zealand continues to provide technical and financial assistance to ASEAN in the implementation of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) through the AANZFTA Economic Cooperation Support Programme. The ASEAN-Closer Economic Relations (CER) Integration Partnership Forum series continue to be a platform to share experience in economic integration between the Australia-New Zealand CER partnership and ASEAN.
56. ASEAN and New Zealand have also stepped up people-to-people linkages. Several new initiatives were launched in 2016, including fellowship, young diplomat study tour, young business leaders initiatives, and scholarship for ASEAN students.

## **ASEAN-Russia**

57. Russia has been actively promoting cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms in areas such as confidence building, military medicine, ICT security, counter-terrorism and combating transnational crime.
58. ASEAN and Russia continue to implement the Trade and Investment Cooperation Roadmap, aiming to institutionalise a comprehensive dialogue mechanism on trade-related issues. The roadmap comprises five key areas: namely, high-level policy dialogue; consultations at the Senior Economic Officials level; sectoral dialogues between ASEAN and Russian officials; trade and investment facilitation; and enhancing dialogue with businesses. ASEAN and Russia are also exploring closer economic partnership, including through a feasibility study on a region-to-region free trade agreement between ASEAN and the Eurasian Economic Union.

## **ASEAN- New Zealand**

54. New Zealand has been actively promoting cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms in areas such as maritime security and counter-terrorism.

59. ASEAN and Russia are actively working together to promote cooperation in education, and youth and people-to-people exchange to further strengthen friendly relations and cooperation.

### **ASEAN-United States of America (US)**

60. ASEAN and the US are commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Dialogue Relations in 2017. A series of commemorative activities are being lined up to signify the occasion. The visit of Vice President Mike Pence to the ASEAN Secretariat in April 2017 reaffirmed US commitment to strengthen and deepen its strategic partnership with ASEAN.

61. ASEAN and the US continue to advance cooperation on traditional and non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, violent extremism, drug trafficking, maritime security, cyber security, trafficking in persons, and wildlife and timber trafficking. The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Informal Dialogue with the US Secretary of Defense in September 2016 reaffirmed the commitment of both sides to work together to address common security challenges.

62. Significant progress has been made on the economic front, including the opening of the US-ASEAN Connect Centres in Jakarta and Bangkok in September 2016. The centres will better coordinate US economic engagement in the region and bring together entrepreneurs, investors and businesses. The US has also stepped up its engagement with ASEAN through the ASEAN-US Energy Cooperation Work Plan 2016-2020 and the launch of USAID's new Clean Power programme to increase the supply of grid-connected renewable energy.

63. Progress has also been made in the ASEAN-US Trade and Investment Framework

Arrangement and the ASEAN-US Expanded Economic Engagement Initiatives, which would enhance economic relations between the parties. The US continues to support ASEAN's integration and community building efforts through various development cooperation programmes. These support ASEAN Connectivity, facilitate trade, promote small and medium enterprises, economic empowerment of women, protection of the rights of women and children, and link social organisations in the region.

64. ASEAN and the US have intensified people-to-people connectivity, particularly among young people, through the Young Southeast Asian Leaders' Initiative (YSEALI), the Fulbright US-ASEAN Visiting Scholars Initiative, ASEAN-US Science and Technology Fellows Programme, and the ASEAN-US Science Prize for Women, among others. A new Fulbright ASEAN Research Programme for US Scholars was also launched in 2017 to further promote mutual understanding.

### **ASEAN Plus Three (APT)**

65. APT countries (ASEAN plus China, Japan, Korea) are enhancing efforts to address emerging challenges in the areas of traditional and non-traditional security such as cyber security, maritime security, terrorism, extremism, narcotics drugs, trafficking in persons, arms smuggling and disaster management.

66. APT cooperation in finance has been improved with the readiness of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation agreement serving as the regional financial safety net. The ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office also became operational as an International Organisation since February 2016. And under the Asian Bond Market Initiative (ABMI), following the successful

- implementation of the nine priorities under the New ABMI Road Map+ (2012-2015), current activities will be further advanced while new ones will be added to the proposed Medium-Term Road Map.
67. Tourism cooperation among the APT countries is being promoted through the Memorandum of Cooperation on APT Tourism Cooperation, which was signed in January 2016 in Manila.
68. In agriculture and forestry, progress has been made in the implementation of ongoing activities under the APT Cooperation Strategy Framework, especially on food security and bio-energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable forest management, agricultural research and development, and human resource development.
69. Under the socio-cultural pillar, cooperation is gaining strength, particularly in the areas of education, culture, youth, health, civil service matters and the environment.
70. The APT countries have conducted a review and assessment of the East Asian Vision Group II recommendations which aim to promote future APT cooperation. Several action plans for selected recommendations have been developed and are being implemented. A progress report was submitted to the 19<sup>th</sup> APT Summit in September 2016.
- engagement of the EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta has been established to enhance coordination and ensure implementation of the leaders' decisions.
72. EAS cooperation is progressing well in the six priority areas: energy, education, finance, global health issues and pandemic diseases, environment and disaster management, and ASEAN Connectivity.
73. Implementation of programmes for EAS energy cooperation is ongoing, particularly in the three work streams on (i) Energy Efficiency and Conservation; (ii) Biofuels for Transport and Other Purposes; and (iii) Renewable and Alternative Power Generation.
74. Following the completion of the EAS Education Plan 2011-2015, future EAS cooperation in education will be aligned with the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020. Programmes aimed at enhancing students and people-to-people linkages in East Asia are ongoing.
75. On global health issues, efforts to implement the Asia Pacific Leaders' Malaria Elimination Roadmap continue with the goal of establishing a Malaria-free Asia-Pacific by 2030. An "EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Health Security relating to Communicable Diseases with Epidemic and Pandemic Potential" was also adopted at the 11<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit held on 8 September 2016.
76. EAS cooperation on disaster management has gained strength through existing mechanisms, including improved cooperation between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management and the disaster management authorities of non-ASEAN EAS participating countries. These countries support ASEAN

- to achieve the objectives of the AADMER Work Plan (ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response).
77. The EAS recognises the growing need to address pressing and emerging challenges of common interest and concern, such as maritime cooperation, terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crimes. A number of initiatives were endorsed at the 11<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit, including the “Vientiane Declaration on Promoting Infrastructure Development Cooperation in East Asia”, “East Asia Summit Statement on Non-Proliferation”, and “East Asia Summit Declaration on Strengthening Responses to Migrants in Crisis and Trafficking in Persons”.
- ### **ASEAN-Norway**
78. After Norway was conferred the status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in August 2015, an inaugural ASEAN-Norway Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee Meeting was held in December 2015 to mark the start of formal engagement between ASEAN and Norway.
79. An informal trilateral meeting between H.E. Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR; H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN; and H.E. Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway; was convened on 24 July 2016 at the sidelines of the 49<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (AMM) in Vientiane. The ministers exchanged views at the informal meeting on ways and means to broaden and strengthen the ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Relations.
80. ASEAN and Norway are developing a Priority Plan to promote effective cooperation through activities to deepen dialogue and cooperation on matters of mutual interest. The Priority Plan aims to set the overall framework and priorities for engagement and cooperation between ASEAN and Norway under the ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Partnership.
- ### **ASEAN-Switzerland**
81. Switzerland was conferred the status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN at the 49<sup>th</sup> AMM in 2016. Formal engagement began when the First ASEAN-Switzerland Joint Sectoral Cooperation Meeting was held on 28 November 2016 at the ASEAN Secretariat during which both sides exchanged views on possible priority areas of cooperation.
82. Both sides are currently developing a list of priorities for ASEAN-Switzerland cooperation with emphasis on projects/activities to be implemented in 2017. A plan is being developed on Practical Cooperation Areas 2017-2021 with a view to supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- ### **ASEAN-Pakistan**
83. ASEAN and Pakistan are currently working to convene the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee Meeting in 2017 to pursue future cooperation. A plan of action or work programme between ASEAN and Pakistan is being explored to serve as a pathway for ASEAN and Pakistan to enhance their cooperation.
- ### **ASEAN-Germany**
84. ASEAN conferred on Germany the status of Development Partner at the 49<sup>th</sup> AMM

- in 2016. The Inaugural ASEAN-Germany Development Partnership Committee (AG-DPC) Meeting was held in January 2017, to take stock of the current status of ASEAN-Germany cooperation. The Meeting discussed possible areas for future cooperation, such as technical and skills training, tourism, green and renewable energy, sustainable development, promotion of small and medium industries, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, support for the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC 2025) and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III.
85. Following the Inaugural AG-DPC, a list of Practical Cooperation Areas is being developed to implement future cooperation under the framework of the ASEAN-Germany Development Partnership. This will further substantiate the partnership and cooperation while focusing on practical areas where ASEAN and Germany have expertise and mutual interests.

### **ASEAN – United Nations (UN)**

86. ASEAN and the UN reaffirmed commitments to further strengthen their partnership. The Interface Meeting between the CPR and the UN, and the ASEAN-UN Secretariat-to-Secretariat Meeting were convened in April 2017 at the ASEAN Secretariat to review the implementation of the first ASEAN-UN plan of action, which was adopted in September 2016. Both sides also continue to hold a series of “track 1.5” workshops on peace building, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy. ASEAN continues to undertake various initiatives and activities, with the support of the UN, to enhance complementarities between the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ASEAN Vision 2025.

## **ASEAN COOPERATION WITH OTHER REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

### **ASEAN – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

87. ASEAN and the GCC are currently working to convene the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN – GCC Ministerial Meeting in 2017. Both sides are exploring the possibility of developing a new plan of action to shape future cooperation between the two sides.

### **ASEAN-Pacific Alliance (PA)**

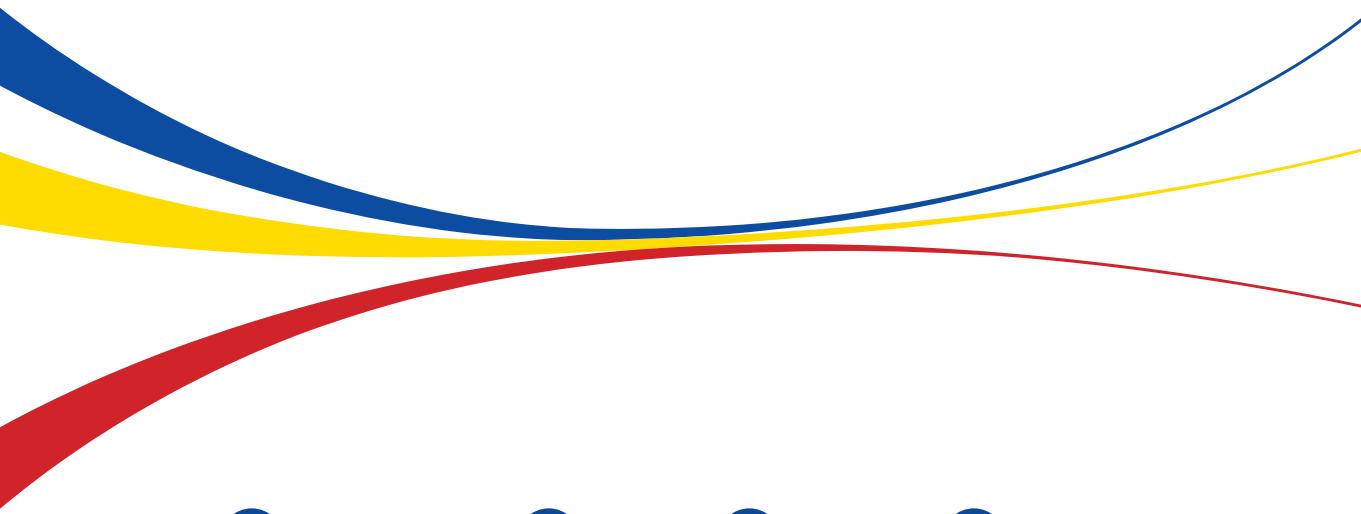
88. The ASEAN-PA Framework for Cooperation was adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-PA Ministerial Meeting in September 2016 in New York at the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. The framework aims to enhance cooperation based on mutual interest and to bring relations closer in the areas of economics; education and people-to-people contacts; science, technology and innovation; and sustainable development. Both sides are currently discussing concrete cooperation activities and identifying implementable activities in various cooperation areas.

### **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**

89. The 11<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit was held on 15-16 July 2016 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in conjunction with the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEM. It took stock of the two decades of partnership and cooperation across the three pillars of ASEM cooperation – political, economic and socio-cultural – and to chart future directions for the two regions. The leaders also exchanged views on a number of regional and international issues of common concern and interest.







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