



**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMIT**  
Viet Nam, 14 November 2020

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1. The 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit was held via video conference on 14 November 2020. The Meeting was chaired by His Excellency Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of the Social Republic of Viet Nam, and attended by Heads of State/ Government and High Representatives of ASEAN Member States, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK). The Secretary-General of ASEAN, and Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat were also in attendance.

**Review and Future Direction of APT Cooperation**

2. We underscored the importance of the APT in East Asia cooperation towards the long-term goal of building an East Asia community, with ASEAN as the driving force. We noted with satisfaction the substantive progress in APT cooperation and reiterated our commitment to further strengthening and deepening APT functional cooperation under the APT process. We further underlined the mutually reinforcing and complementary nature of the APT with other ASEAN-led frameworks. We also recognised the importance of APT to ASEAN's efforts towards realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III (2016-2020) and Work Plan IV (2021 -2025), and deeper regional integration in East Asia.

3. We were pleased with the further strengthening of APT cooperation and commended the steady progress in the implementation of the APT Cooperation Work Plan (2018-2022). To maintain this positive momentum, we called for more projects and activities with concrete outcomes to further implement the action lines in APT cooperation over the next years. In this regard, we noted the Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2018-2022). We also underscored the importance of the effective utilisation and prudent management of the APT Cooperation Fund to implement activities under the Work Plan.

4. We acknowledged the importance of the APT in maintaining and enhancing peace, security, stability and development in East Asia. We reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen dialogue and cooperation to combat transnational crimes and to address non-traditional security issues articulated in the APT Cooperation Work Plan 2018-2022, such as trafficking in persons, cybercrime, countering terrorism and violent extremism and illicit drug trafficking.

5. We noted the progress in the implementation of action plans for the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) II selected recommendations which would pave the way towards greater APT cooperation. We looked forward to the implementation of the remaining projects and activities under the action plans. We welcomed Indonesia's proposal to hold the APT Student Camp and APT Seminar on East Asian Studies at Major Universities which aims to cultivate of an East Asian identity through promotion of ASEAN Studies and East Asian Studies in the region until the situation allows.

6. We underscored the importance of multilateralism, regionalism and international law in contributing to global and regional peace, stability and prosperity. ASEAN Leaders reiterated the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) as a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, and encouraged the enhancement of APT cooperation in the four key areas of cooperation identified in the AOIP, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, sustainable development, economic and other areas of cooperation to further promote mutual trust and confidence as well as to contribute to peace and prosperity in the region.

7. We reaffirmed the role of APT cooperation in effective control and containment of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in mitigating its socio-economic impact on their respective countries and the region, as underlined in the Joint Statement of the Special APT Summit on COVID-19 convened via videoconference on 14 April 2020. We acknowledged the support and contribution of the Plus Three countries to ASEAN Member States, and ASEAN's initiatives in addressing COVID-19 which includes, among others, the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (RRMS). We also encouraged to enhance efforts towards setting up the APT reserve of essential medical supplies to coordinate and synergize with the RRMS.

8. We emphasised the need to strengthen APT collaboration in advancing the region's recovery from the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic. In this regard, we welcomed the ASEAN Plus Three Plan of Action (APT POA) on Mitigating the Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic which was endorsed at the 23rd AEM Plus Three Consultations on 28 August 2020, to implement ASEAN Plus Three Economic Ministers' Joint Statement on Mitigating the Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic adopted on 4 June 2020). We looked forward to the effective implementation of the APT POA which would bring about collaboration and coordination between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries, as well as prepare the region for future emergency situations, and achieve post pandemic economic recovery. We recognised the collaborative work of the four research institutes from APT members (CAITEC, JETRO, KIEP and ERIA) in completing the Final Joint Study on "10+3 Cooperation for Improvement of Supply Chain Connectivity" that would benefit the region and enhance ASEAN-Plus Three economic relations. In addition, we adopted the APT Leaders' Statement on Strengthening APT Cooperation for

Economic and Financial Resilience in the face of Emerging Challenges to realise the commitment of the APT countries to cooperate and collaborate on overcoming the challenges brought about by COVID-19.

9. We underlined the importance of trade and investment relations between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries. In 2019, total trade between ASEAN and the Plus Three Countries in 2019 reached USD 890.2 billion, representing 31.6 per cent of ASEAN's total trade. Meanwhile, total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from the Plus Three Countries into ASEAN were valued at USD 32.0 billion in 2019, accounting for 19.9 per cent of total FDI inflows into ASEAN.

10. We stressed the importance of keeping the markets open, maintaining an open, free, fair, non-discriminatory and rules-based trading environment in consideration of their domestic laws and regulations, to strengthen the openness, connectedness, resiliency and sustainability of regional supply chains and maintain necessary flow of essential goods and services including food, medicines, medical and other essential supplies, including maintaining necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating the essential movement of people and goods for diplomatic, humanitarian, scientific and business activities. We reiterated the need for the resumption of safe and essential travels to jumpstart the region's economic recovery. We also need to identify joint activities that can be undertaken to promote business linkages among APT countries. The East Asia Business Council (EABC) that we have established could play a bigger role in this respect. We also emphasized emergency measures deemed necessary for responding to public health emergencies should be targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary and consistent with WTO rules and not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption of global and regional supply chains.

11. We reaffirmed our strong commitment to upholding an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based multilateral trading system anchored by the World Trade Organization (WTO). We also reaffirmed our support for enhanced regional economic integration. In this regard, we welcomed the conclusion and signing of the RCEP agreement at the 4<sup>th</sup> RCEP Summit on 15 November 2020, which demonstrated our strong commitment to supporting economic recovery, inclusive development as well as our support for an open, inclusive, rules-based trade and investment arrangement.

12. We acknowledged the key leadership role of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the fundamental role of the United Nations system in catalyzing and coordinating the comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognized the importance of following up on the resolution at the 73rd World Health Assembly in its entirety, including the Assembly's call for actions by WHO Members States, International Organizations and relevant stakeholders and the WHO Director-General.

13. We noted the successful convening of the 20th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three (AMAF+3), and were pleased with the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Strategy (APTCS) 2016-2025. We called for the enhancement of APT cooperation in ensuring food

security particularly in the post-pandemic period, including through the full and effective utilization of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), to overcome possible food shortages as well as strengthen the resiliency and sustainability of regional food supply chains by working closely together to ensure that markets are kept open and transportation of agricultural and food products are facilitated.

14. We affirmed our commitment to pursuing a sustainable post-pandemic economic recovery measures in the energy sector by strengthening partnership and innovation towards energy security, energy transition, and energy resilience. We acknowledged the importance of realistic and pragmatic energy policy by utilising appropriate energy sources and technologies for achieving both goals of economic growth from COVID-19 pandemic and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. We welcome the convening of the 17th ASEAN+3 Energy Ministers' Meeting hosted by Viet Nam via videoconference in conjunction with the 38th ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting and Associated Meetings (38th AMEM) on 17-20 November 2020.

15. We noted the region's increased dependence on the digital economy during the pandemic. To this end, we stressed the need for the region to identify challenges and opportunities as the region's economies gird themselves for the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and to harness the latter as a tool to foster APT's economic recovery.

16. We stressed the need to assist people and businesses affected by the impact of COVID-19, especially the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), start-ups and vulnerable groups, including through facilitating their integration into the digital economy, access to digital infrastructure and use of technologies to allow the MSMEs to maintain operations and enhance business competitiveness. We reaffirmed our continuing support for future initiatives aimed at preparing MSMEs for the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

17. We recognised the potentials presented by the on-going digital transformation to improve the region's long-term competitiveness and the livelihood of its people. We support the development of digital economy and innovative growth to enhance the regional resilience. We were pleased to note the progress made in advancing the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) and ASEAN looked forward to forging partnership with the Plus Three countries' to achieve smart and sustainable urban development in the region. We acknowledged the need to explore cooperation in intellectual property between ASEAN and Plus Three countries, recognizing the importance of promoting the protection of intellectual properties through cooperation, in order to contribute to the balanced growth of the region.

18. We underscored the importance of the ASEAN+3 Finance process in enhancing regional economic and financial stability. We noted the continued commitment by APT Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to strengthening the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), the regional financial safety net of the APT. We commended the accomplishments made in fostering closer regional

financial cooperation towards a more resilient, inclusive and integrated APT region. We welcomed the amended CMIM Agreement, which came into effect on June 23, 2020 and the outcome of the APT Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting held on 18 September 2020, which affirmed that they continue working together to further enhance regional economic and financial stability and to explore new initiatives in potential financial cooperation areas, including through the CMIM, the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), and the Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI), as well as the Strategic Directions of ASEAN+3 Finance Process. We continue to support the efforts of the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF) in strengthening the financial resilience of ASEAN member countries against climate and disaster risks. We encouraged the APT Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism (APTIBCM) to provide financing and related services to facilitate social and economic recovery in the region.

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

20. We were pleased with the progress in implementing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and looked forward to forging cooperation with APT countries to advance its implementation in the strategic area of sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility. We reiterated the importance of developing links and synergies between MPAC 2025 and key connectivity initiatives in the region as outlined in our Statement on Connecting the Connectivities Initiative that was adopted at the 22<sup>nd</sup> APT Summit in November 2019. In this regard, we noted Thailand's proposal to organise a regional seminar to explore synergy through enhanced partnership and develop recommendations to implement the Statement.

21. We noted the successful convening of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) Consultations with Dialogue Partners and Other External Partners on Connectivity and the 11th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium on Enhancing ASEAN Cohesiveness, Responsiveness through Resilient Connectivity and Human Capital Development, with support from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), on 26 August 2020 and 28 August 2020, respectively.

22. We emphasised the importance of cultural exchanges and people-to-people links to heighten awareness and foster intercultural understanding and ASEAN identity in the region. In this regard, we encouraged the development of more project initiatives under the ASEAN Plus Three Work Plan on Cooperation in Culture and Arts 2019-2021. We also looked forward to the promotion of the 10+3 Network of Culture Cities and City-Level Exchanges especially through the Network of APT Culture Cities.

23. We reaffirmed our commitment to implementing the priority areas of APT health

cooperation, which includes universal health coverage, utilising ICT for healthcare, non-communicable diseases, traditional and complementary medicine, active ageing, human resources for health, responding to communicable and emerging health threats and food safety, as well as issues related to antimicrobial resistance, ending all forms of malnutrition, and disaster health management.

24. We noted the Joint Statement of the 8th APT Health Ministers Meeting on 30 August 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia supporting the theme of Accelerating Health for All in ASEAN. We noted the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaborative activities to be undertaken in promoting healthy and active ageing as complemented by the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) in Thailand. We acknowledged efforts to strengthen the healthcare and welfare system under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN). We also noted the commitment of the APT health sector to continuing efforts on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) and the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED III) to enhance ASEAN Member States and Plus Three Countries' capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats.

25. We welcomed the commitment of the APT Health Ministers made at their meeting via videoconference on 7 April 2020 to enhancing free, open, responsible, transparent and timely sharing of information, data and expertise on COVID-19 prevention, detection, control and response measures, epidemiologic surveillance updates, risk assessment results, epidemiological and clinical studies on the virus and the disease, treatment experience, including the application of traditional medicine and technical guidelines. We also recognized the importance of cooperation in development, manufacturing and distribution of diagnostics, anti-viral medicines, therapeutics (Japan) and vaccines, adhering to the objectives of efficiency, safety, equal accessibility and affordability and noted the role of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and the International Vaccine Institute (IVI), as well as the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility and Advance Market Commitment in developing and delivering vaccines. We also emphasized the importance of equitable access and distribution of affordable vaccines among APT countries, once available. We also encouraged continuing commitment, after overcoming the challenges related to COVID-19 and revitalising national health systems, on collaboration in learning from the regional and national experiences in responding to COVID-19 challenges, as well as to further strengthen and institutionalise preparedness, surveillance, prevention, detection and response mechanisms of the ASEAN and Plus Three Countries on public health emergencies and other crises.

26. We reiterated the commitment to advancing cooperation in promoting sustainable, inclusive and innovative development, as well as in strengthening cooperation with all stakeholders, including the private sector, to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We support ASEAN's efforts in

narrowing the development gap and promoting sustainable and equitable development across the ASEAN Community including through aligning sub-regional growth with the comprehensive development of ASEAN. We reaffirmed our commitment to forge closer cooperation in poverty alleviation and welcomed the continued progress of the East Asia Poverty Reduction Cooperation Initiative, which is to implement the EAVG II recommendation. We called for development of collaborative projects to protect and conserve the environment and biodiversity, to promote sustainable use as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of natural resources, including water resource management, and to address climate change, air pollution and marine plastic debris. In this regard, we welcomed the continuous contribution of the Plus Three countries to reduce marine debris in particular through the ASEAN Plus Three Marine Plastic Debris Cooperative Action Initiative, and collective effort towards the achievement of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

27. We were encouraged by the progress of cooperation on social welfare and development through the SOMSWD+3 platform. We reaffirm our commitment to forging ahead with the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Framework and Action Plan on Implementing the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection and the ASEAN Enabling Master plan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with the emphasis on strengthening social protection systems for vulnerable groups to ensure access to much needed public goods and services. We look forward to the roll-out of the Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Towards Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community particularly the development and implementation of the declaration's regional plan of action. We likewise looked forward to the development of regional plans of action to implement Declaration on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN, and the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration.

28. We reaffirmed our commitment to promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through the ACW+3 platform. We commended the continued efforts of ACW to forge ahead with gender mainstreaming efforts across the ASEAN Community Pillars and with advancing Women, Peace and Security. We looked forward to the finalization of Regional Strategic Framework on Gender Mainstreaming and the Regional Study on Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN. We shared the need on working closely to strengthen gender data and statistics for evidence-informed policy and programme.

29. We reiterated the need for an enabling environment with supporting instruments that would facilitate student mobility with quality assurance among the APT countries. In this regard, we looked forward to the continued implementation of the APT Guidelines on Transcripts and Supplemental Documents for Academic Records of Exchange Students, which was adopted by the APT Education Ministers in November 2018. We also noted the adoption of the APT Plan of Action on Education 2018-2025 by the APT Education Ministers and its ongoing implementation.

30. We commended the efforts of the APT Ministerial Meeting on Youth in providing greater access for engagement among youth in APT countries and establishing effective communication through various annual youth exchanges and community immersions which provided an opportunity for meaningful cross-cultural understanding. We commended the commitment of ASEAN Youth Ministers to further strengthening APT collaborations on youth development with a view to addressing the challenges of Industry 4.0, digitalisation and the evolving demand of the labour market and noted with satisfaction the contribution of youth empowerment activities and people-to-people exchange programmes among APT countries. We welcomed the development of the APT Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025 to support APT initiatives in youth development. We welcomed the holding of an APT Student Camp, which would be held in 2021. The activity is the implementation of EAVG II recommendation on enhancing people-to-people connectivity in the East Asia region.

31. We commended the steady progress of implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM+3) Work Plan 2016-2020 which covered areas of mutual interests including e-governance, human resource management and human resource development, productivity in public sector, good governance, public sector reform, local administration capacity building and cooperation, and research and innovation. We welcomed the development of the ACCSM+3 Work Plan 2021-2025 which would further promote good governance and support the agility of ASEAN's civil service in facing global challenges. On this note, we looked forward to the implementation of the project on Mainstreaming Gender in HR Policies, Processes and Systems and the Baseline Study on Governance Systems among APT Countries, which would be both supported by the APT Cooperation Fund. We applauded the finalisation of the ASEAN Guideline on Public Service Delivery, which was supported by the APT Cooperation Fund, and looked forward to the implementation of the Guidelines that would strengthen the capabilities of ASEAN civil service to deliver high quality public service to the people of ASEAN.

32. We noted the strengthening of the APT cooperation in the labour sector through the development of the first APT Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM+3) Work Plan 2021-2025 that would cover the areas of human resources development, inclusive growth, sustainable development as a response to the ASEAN economic integration, social dialogue, and occupational safety and health in the workplace, and social protection. We looked forward to the effective implementation of the Work Plan through practical activities and projects. We appreciated the support of the Republic of Korea to the development of the ASEAN Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies to Promote Decent Work for All and the Project on Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Human Resources through Responsive TVET Curriculum supported by Involvement of Industries and Labour Market Information. We also appreciated the support of Japan to the Study on Old-Age Income Security in ASEAN Member States and the Project on Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Competency Certification Systems through the Application of ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency



Certification Systems within ASEAN Economies. We supported to strengthen cooperation in support for the realisation of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Human Resource Development for the Changing World of Work adopted at the 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit with the view to preparing the ASEAN's workforce for the future of work.

33. We encouraged the enhancement of regional cooperation on disaster management and emergency response by promoting cooperation on policy coordination, information exchanges and conducting joint exercises to effectively promote disaster management reduce disaster risks and losses in the region, supporting regional and sub-regional capacities in disaster management and emergency response, addressing their disruptions to the socio-economic development.

34. We acknowledged the important contribution of the East Asia Forum (EAF) as a Track 1.5 level platform for government, business, academia and think tanks to further deepen East Asia cooperation. In this regard, we welcomed the convening of the 18<sup>th</sup> EAF under the theme "Strengthening the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation for economic and financial resilience in the face of emerging challenges", to be hosted via videoconference by Viet Nam on 25 November 2020.

35. We also recognised the important contributions of the Network of East Asia Think-Tanks (NEAT) towards APT cooperation. We welcomed the outcomes of NEAT meetings last year, which advocated for socio-cultural connectivity and the establishment of smart and sustainable cities in East Asia. Cultural institutions and related networks need to be strengthened.

36. We also underscored the importance of forging closer cooperation in other areas such as science, technology and innovation, tourism, media, food and energy security, and minerals. We further noted that the APT tourism sector is developing an APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2021-2025 for adoption in the first quarter of 2021. In this regard, we tasked the APT tourism senior officials to develop strategic cooperation programmes, taking into account new dynamics in the industry and to explore innovative ways to revitalise the tourism sector in the post-COVID19 pandemic in collaboration with all stakeholders including the private sector. In addition, we encouraged the APT countries to explore closer cooperation in other areas such as supporting MSMEs, climate change, human resource development, women empowerment and gender equality, disaster management and narrowing the development gap.

### **Regional and International Issues**

37. We underscored the importance of promoting peace, stability and cooperation for development and supported efforts in promoting dialogue, cooperation, and confidence-building, upholding the rule of law, addressing disputes and differences through consultation as well as peaceful means in accordance with international law. We recognized the efforts and achievements in advancing the peace process on the

Korean Peninsula over the last three years. We stressed the importance of continued sustainable peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to achieve peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. We urged all parties concerned to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working constructively towards the goals of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, including through the full and expeditious implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the Joint Statement by the Leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We underscored the significance of maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and noted the ROK's proposals to advance inter-Korean relations. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We noted the importance of international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We stressed the need to promote a conducive atmosphere to peaceful dialogue among the concerned partners, including through utilizing ASEAN-led platforms. We noted views expressed by some Leaders on the importance of addressing issues of humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the resolution of the abductions issues.

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