



**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 26<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN PLUS THREE SUMMIT  
JAKARTA, INDONESIA  
6 SEPTEMBER 2023**

1. The 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit was held on 6 September 2023 in Jakarta. The Summit was chaired by H.E. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, and attended by ASEAN Member States, the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as an Observer. The Secretary-General of ASEAN, the Director of ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), and the Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) were also in attendance.

**Review and Future Direction of APT Cooperation**

2. We noted with satisfaction the progress in APT cooperation over the past years and discussed its future direction. We reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthening and deepening the APT process, which plays a key role in regional community-building efforts and in promoting peace, stability, and security in the East Asian region with ASEAN as the driving force. We further underlined the mutually reinforcing and complementary nature of the APT with other ASEAN-led mechanisms and frameworks. We also recognized the importance of the APT to ASEAN's efforts towards realizing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV (2021 -2025), deeper regional integration in the region as well to implement the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
3. We were pleased with the substantial progress made in the implementation of the APT Cooperation Work Plan (2023-2027), particularly in the areas of trade and investment, tourism, science and technology, social welfare, environment, civil service, labour, culture, media, education, and public health. We highlighted that the Work Plan would continue to serve as a principal guide to enhance APT cooperation and looked forward to its full and effective implementation over the next five years.
4. We acknowledged the significance of the APT framework in maintaining and enhancing peace, security, stability, and development in East Asia. The Meeting

underscored the need to promote an enabling environment for peace, stability, and prosperous development for all by ensuring a culture of dialogue and cooperation, instead of rivalry, enhancing mutual trust and confidence, and respect for international law.

5. We reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen dialogue and cooperation in combating terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crimes and addressing non-traditional security issues, such as trafficking in persons (TIP), people smuggling, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber (ITWT), cybercrime, illicit drug trafficking, as well as on border management. We welcomed the adoption of the first ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC+3) Work Plan on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime (2024-2027), which covered three priority areas, namely trafficking in persons (TIP), terrorism and cybercrime. We also welcomed the adoption of the first ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting Plus Three (DGICM+3) Work Programme (2023-2024) to enhance practical cooperation on border management and security under the APT. We looked forward to the full and effective implementation of the Work Plan and the Work Programme. We further stressed the importance of strengthening the framework of the ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD+3) Consultation to secure communities against illicit drugs in line with the commitment made in the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan 2023-2027.
6. We reaffirmed the role of APT cooperation in combating the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and mitigating its socio-economic impacts. We acknowledged the support and contribution of the Plus Three countries to ASEAN Member States, and ASEAN's initiatives in addressing COVID-19 which include, among others, the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan. We appreciated Japan's contribution to the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), China's Provisional Product List in-contribution to the proposed APT Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (APTRMS), and the ROK's support for the ASEAN Biodiaspora to enhance the capacity in surveillance of ASEAN Member States. We encouraged further consultation on setting up APTRMS to complement the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies (ARRMS).
7. We noted the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Economic Cooperation Work Programme (ECWP) 2023-2024 and the positive outcomes of economic cooperation under twelve areas, among others, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) development, private sector engagement and stakeholders' dialogues, trade facilitation, digital economy, and green circular economy. We emphasised the need to strengthen APT collaboration to navigate the challenging global environment through stronger and more impactful

cooperation, especially in the areas of sustainable development, digital transformation, supply chain resilience, and pursuing cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

8. We underlined the importance of trade and investment relations between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries. In 2022, trade between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries recorded an increase of 10.2 percent reaching a total value of USD 1,213 billion. Meanwhile, total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from the Plus Three Countries into ASEAN were valued at USD 54.8 billion in 2022, accounting for 24.3 percent of total FDI inflows into ASEAN.
9. We stressed the importance of keeping the markets open to strengthen the connectedness, resiliency, and sustainability of regional logistics systems and supply chains as well as maintain the flow of essential goods and services. We reiterated the need for the resumption of safe, secure, unimpeded, and essential travel to mitigate the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, heightened volatility in the global financial market, and inflationary pressures, all of which could potentially affect economic and trade relations between APT countries.
10. We expressed our appreciation to the East Asia Business Council (EABC) for their support and cooperation as well as valuable inputs in advancing regional economic integration and urged the EABC to continue playing a bigger role in this respect. We encouraged the EABC to promote the utilization of Free Trade Arrangements through capacity building and information dissemination to enterprises, particularly MSMEs, and contribute to the acceleration of digital transformation by sharing expertise and promoting upskilling and reskilling of ASEAN's workforce and MSMEs to fully benefit the opportunities in the digital era.
11. We reaffirmed our strong commitment to a rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, free, fair, inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core. We also expressed our support to strengthen the WTO and ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose and forward-looking by pursuing reforms to improve all its functions, including to have a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all WTO members by 2024. We also expressed our determination to collaborate and coordinate on areas of common interest and contribute to the success of the 13<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) scheduled to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in 2024.
12. We welcomed the progress made since the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement on January 2022 including the entry into force for several remaining RCEP Participating Countries. The entry into force of RCEP in Indonesia and the Philippines reflects our strong commitment to facilitating a regional economic recovery and reaffirms ASEAN's

Centrality to the rules-based order, regional integration as well and economic development across the region. The implementation of the RCEP Agreement in an effective and a transparent manner will provide businesses in the region, especially micro, small, and medium businesses with greater access to markets and more flexible rules of origin, incentivize new trade and investment opportunities, and contribute to stronger and more resilient supply chains.

13. We commended the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Strategy (APTCS) on Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025. We called for the enhancement of APT cooperation in ensuring food security, including through the effective implementation 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 to strengthen the resiliency and sustainability of regional food supply chains and logistics system. We reiterated the importance of enhancing cooperation to achieve resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems. We looked forward to the development of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Sustainable Agriculture. We commended ASEAN's efforts to reduce the use of harmful chemicals in agricultural production and promote the use of viable alternatives, which have been proven to be effective and pose less risk.
14. We underlined the importance of the ASEAN+3 Finance Process in enhancing regional economic and financial stability. Noting the outcomes of the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting (AFMGM+3), we welcomed the continued commitment to strengthening the regional financial safety nets and the ongoing discussion towards the creation of a rapid financing facility with the aim of improving the accessibility and effectiveness of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM). We also welcomed the progress in financial cooperation under the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI), and ASEAN+3 Future Initiatives. We welcomed the joint ADB-ASEAN+3 Report on "Reinvigorating Financing Approaches for Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure in ASEAN+3" developed under the ASEAN+3 Finance Process Working Group 1 on Infrastructure Finance, which offered an "ASEAN+3 voice" on the important topic of infrastructure financing; and noted the successful Ministerial Launch Event of the Report on 2 May 2023.
15. We also welcomed the upgrading of Disaster Risk Financing (DRF) as a regular agenda under the ASEAN+3 finance track as well as the endorsement of the Action Plan to explore insurance and other financing solutions, to facilitate knowledge exchange, and to develop technical solutions building on the existing regional initiatives, such as the ASEAN Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance (ADRFI) and the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF). We also welcomed AMRO's report on Financial Digitalization, which highlights opportunities

and risks and presents forward-looking recommendations for regional financial cooperation.

16. We stressed the need to assist people and businesses affected by the impact of COVID-19, especially the MSMEs, as well as start-ups, and other vulnerable groups, including through facilitating their access to and capacity to use digital technologies to allow the MSMEs to recover and grow their businesses. We further reaffirmed their continuing support for the development of the digital economy and future initiatives aimed at preparing MSMEs to embrace and benefit from the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).
17. We recognised the potential of digital transformation to boost the region's long-term competitiveness and to improve the livelihood of its people. We commended the continued efforts of APT to push forward the digital transformation agenda to strengthen the region's supply chain resilience and drive the recovery of the post-COVID-19 era. We acknowledged the importance of focusing on enhancing APT's capacity to facilitate the flow of data across borders, the development of digital connectivity, and the strengthening of consumer and business trust in the digital economy. We acknowledged the continued support of APT on the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework Action Plan (DIFAP), through capacity-building activities on the use of digital technologies and the mid-term report on the ASEAN Plus Three research project for closing the digital divide in MSMEs.
18. We were pleased to note that the ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Cooperation has incorporated the key strategic actions from the post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism into the APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2021-2025 to further strengthen the cooperation among the APT Countries in recovery efforts. We encouraged the APT countries to further engage all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to speed up the revival of the tourism sector as soon as possible. We looked forward to the development of the Action Plan to implement the ASEAN Framework on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Post-COVID-19 Era.
19. We noted the convening of the 19th ASEAN+3 Ministers on Energy Meeting (19<sup>th</sup> AMEM+3) and were pleased to note the commitment of the AMEM+3 to pursue post-pandemic economic recovery towards sustainable development and growth by accelerating innovation and scale-up of investments to improve and sustain clean and modern energy infrastructure and supply chains towards advancing a just, realistic, resilient and inclusive energy transition and the importance of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).
20. We also acknowledged the need to explore a variety of options and utilize all fuels and technologies to ensure a secure and stable supply of energy for achieving both goals of economic growth from the COVID-19 pandemic and lowering greenhouse gas emissions and shared the view that there is no single pathway to achieve low-

carbon economy, but rather there are various pathways for each country towards carbon neutrality/net-zero emissions depending on the circumstances of each country towards net-zero emissions/carbon neutrality. We noted the continued effort to enhance APT energy cooperation through regional interconnectivity in line with the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC) Phase II: 2021-2025. We also noted other relevant initiatives such as the Japan-led Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) initiative, and the Asia Energy Transition Initiative (AETI).

21. We conveyed gratitude to APT for its commitment to strengthening cooperation in science, technology, and innovation (STI) for the region. We were pleased with the completion of STI initiatives under APT, which includes the ASEAN+3 Student Camp and ASEAN+3 Teacher Workshop for the Gifted in Science; ASEAN+3 Junior Science Odyssey; and Davinci Science Box. We encouraged all APT members to be actively involved in fortifying STI cooperation with mutual benefits.
22. We welcomed the completion of the ASEAN Plus Three Research Project for Closing the Digital Divide in MSMEs undertaken by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the ASEAN Secretariat. The initiative highlights that to address the digital divide among MSMEs, it is imperative to acknowledge that beyond the improvement of digital infrastructure and financial resources, securing a workforce with both digital skills and fundamental business knowledge would be necessary to effectively utilise digital tools.
23. We noted the region's increased reliance 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 prepare themselves for the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and to harness the latter as a tool to foster APT's economic recovery.
24. We recognised the potential of emerging technologies presented by the ongoing digital transformation to boost the region's long-term competitiveness and improve the livelihood of its people. We supported the development of the digital economy and innovative growth to enhance regional resilience. We were pleased to note the strong interest of the Plus Three countries in advancing smart and sustainable city development in the region through the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) and ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS) and looked forward to more partnerships supporting these initiatives.
25. We appreciated the need to explore cooperation in intellectual property between ASEAN and Three countries, recognising the importance of promoting the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) through cooperation to contribute to the balanced growth of the region.

26. We acknowledged the Plus Three countries' support for ASEAN's implementation of the MPAC 2025 and looked forward to enhancing cooperation between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries, including on the ASEAN Tourism Digital Platform supported by China, the Diagnostic Tool to Assess MSMEs' Digital Readiness supported by Japan and the ASEAN-ROK Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Mobility Programme. We reaffirmed the importance of promoting greater connectivity synergies within and beyond the region and encouraged continued efforts in enhancing cooperation between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries through the co-development and co-curation of connectivity initiatives and projects in all five strategic areas of MPAC 2025 namely sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility.
27. We emphasised the need for continued engagement between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the Plus Three countries. We commended the Plus Three countries for actively participating in the recent annual ACCC Consultations with Dialogue Partners and Other External Partners on Connectivity held on 26 July 2023 in Surabaya, Indonesia, and looked forward to their participation in the upcoming 14<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium in November 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia as well as in other events organized by the ACCC.
28. We committed to enhancing cooperation between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries in smart and sustainable city development through the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy under MPAC 2025 and the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN). We commended Japan's efforts to foster smart city cooperation through the Japan Association for Smart Cities in ASEAN (JASCA) and Smart City supported by Japan ASEAN Mutual Partnership (SmartJAMP) and convening of the annual ASEAN-Japan Smart Cities Network High-level Meetings. We appreciate ROK's support in establishing the ASEAN Smart City Professional Program (ASPP) that helps create a regional community of young leaders advancing smart cities.
29. We commended the efforts of the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC), ASEAN-Japan Centre (AJC) and ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC) to promote trade, investment, culture, tourism, media, and people-to-people exchanges between and among 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 and to continue facilitating trade and economic cooperation among APT countries through various activities jointly or respectively carried out by the three Centres.
30. We emphasised the importance of cultural exchanges and people-to-people links to increase awareness and foster intercultural understanding and ASEAN identity in the region. In this regard, we encouraged the effective implementation of the

projects under the ASEAN Plus Three Work Plan on Cooperation in Culture and Arts 2022-2025. We also looked forward to greater cooperation in culture and arts fields to promote active exchange among APT countries through various channels. In addition, we encouraged greater collaborations to leverage digital transformation for the media and information sector under the Work Plan on Enhancing ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation through Information and Media 2018-2023.

31. We reaffirmed our commitment to implementing the priority areas of APT health collaboration, which includes universal health coverage, disease surveillance, utilising digital health for healthcare, prevention, and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, traditional and complementary medicine, healthy and active aging, human resources for health, mental health, responding to emerging diseases and public health emergencies, and food safety, as well as combatting antimicrobial resistance through One Health approach, ending all forms of malnutrition.
32. We commended the efforts of the APT Health Ministers Meeting and noted the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaborative activities to be undertaken in promoting healthy and active aging as complemented by the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI) in which the agreement entered into force in 2020. We acknowledged the efforts in strengthening the healthcare and welfare system under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN). We noted the commitment of the APT health sectors in 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 the ASEAN Member States and the Plus Three countries' capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats.
33. We reiterated the commitment to advance 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 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We called for the development of collaborative projects to protect and conserve the environment and biodiversity, to promote sustainable use of natural resources including sustainable forest management and water resource management, to address the impact of climate change and the issue of marine plastic debris, and to address air pollution through the support of the establishment and the operationalization of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution (ACCTHPC) and the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP).
34. We welcomed the continuous contribution of the Plus Three countries to reduce marine debris through the ASEAN Plus Three Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative and support the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris in the ASEAN Member States 2021-2025. We



welcomed in particular activities of the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (RKC-MPD) as an information clearinghouse for the marine plastic issue, as well as collective efforts towards the achievement of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

35. We reaffirmed the commitment to promote and support sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development across the ASEAN community, including the protection of and mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities through developing accessible services to health, education, employment, social protection, and digital inclusion, to accelerate ASEAN disability-inclusive development.
36. We reaffirmed the commitment to forging closer cooperation in poverty alleviation for sustainable development. Following the adoption of the Joint Statement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Village Network during the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit in May 2023, we looked forward to exploring ways to support the sustainability of the ASEAN Village Network, through, among others, the development of infrastructure and human resources, capacity building programmes, and technical exchange activities, guided by the Framework Action Plan on Rural Development, Poverty Eradication 2016–2025 and the ASEAN Masterplan on Rural Development 2022-2026, and the regional mechanism of the ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE+3).
37. We reaffirmed our commitment to promoting and protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups, achieving gender equality, social inclusion, and the empowerment of women and girls. We commended the continued efforts of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) to forge ahead with the implementation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (AGMSF) across the ASEAN Community Pillars and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action (RPA) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). We looked forward to strengthening and continuing cooperation for capacity building for empowering women in the context of WPS.
38. We stressed the crucial role of the APT cooperation on social welfare and development through the ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD+3) and the ASEAN Plus Three Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD+3). This is particularly essential in view of the megatrend of ageing societies and its impacts on the region. We endeavoured to explore ways to expand cooperation on empowering older persons and persons with disabilities, enhancing access to social protection and health care in old age, building capacities, and raising the profiles of social workers and the broader social service workforce using gender-

mainstreaming and rights-based approaches as reflected in the Joint Statement of the 7<sup>th</sup> AMMSWD+3 Meeting held on 25 May 2023.

39. We underscored the crucial importance of education for human resource development as well as social and economic well-being in post-pandemic recovery. In this regard, we welcomed the commitment of the APT Education Ministers at the 6<sup>th</sup> APT Education Ministers Meeting, held on 14 October 2022 in Hanoi to reaffirm the crucial role of APT cooperation in addressing the learning crisis, accelerating learning recovery, and building resilience in education in the post-COVID era. We also encouraged the enhancement of cooperation in the Campus Asia Plus Program and welcomed the initiatives of the Working Group on Student Mobility and Quality Assurance of Higher Education among APT countries such as the development of the the APT Joint Guidelines for New Form of Mobility in Higher Education. We also noted other relevant initiatives such as MEXT scholarships, ASIA KAKEHASHI Project+ (Plus), and Sakura Science Exchange Program.
40. We noted the convening of the Eighth APT Ministerial Meeting on Youth (8<sup>th</sup> AMMY+3) via videoconference on 21 June 2023 and were pleased to note the progress of implementation of the APT Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025 across the five priorities. We commended the longstanding efforts of the APT Senior Officials Meeting on Youth and relevant ASEAN entities in facilitating increased opportunities for youth in APT countries to actively participate and maintain their involvement in the ASEAN Community building and people-to-people exchange. We noted the steadfast commitment of Lao PDR to implement the ASEAN Plus Three on Skills Development for Youth in Sustainable Eco-Tourism and Agro-Tourism project through support from the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund (APTCF).
41. We commended the steady progress of implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM+3) Work Plan 2021-2025 that covers areas of mutual interests including e-governance, human resource management and human resource development, productivity in the public sector, good governance, public sector reform, local administration capacity building and cooperation, and research and innovation. We also noted the initiatives supported by the APT Cooperation Fund that sought to strengthen the overall capabilities of the ASEAN civil services, including the ongoing Baseline Study on Governance Systems among APT countries and the ASEAN Guidelines on Public Service Delivery. We noted the completion of the International Conference on Human Resource Management in the Public Sector on November 1, 2022, in Sejong, led by the Republic of Korea (ROK) as part of the work plan for 2021-2025. We noted with satisfaction the implementation of the Guidelines through the completion of the Study Visit on Public Service Delivery to ROK on 12-16 December 2022 and the upcoming study visit to China. We looked forward to the convening of the Workshop on Digitalization in

Public Administration, a Series of Workshops on Transformative Leadership (Building Capacity on Transformative Leadership in the Civil Service of ASEAN Member States), and the International Symposium hosted by Japan in September 2023 with the theme of "The Future of Civil Service" that would further support the realisation of an agile, future-ready ASEAN civil services.

42. We commended the strengthening of the APT cooperation in the labour sector through the effective implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> APT Senior Labour Officials' Meeting (SLOM+3) Work Plan 2021-2025 through practical activities and projects that covered 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 encouraged APT cooperation on the protection of ASEAN migrant workers and their family members in crisis situations as well as migrant fishers in the entire migration cycle.
43. We noted the successful completion of the Study on Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Human Resources through Responsive TVET Curriculum as Component 1 of the ASEAN-ROK TEAM Project last year and the successful convening of the ASEAN+3 E-Forum on Skills Development on "Promoting Effective Policies towards a Human-Centred, Inclusive, and Resilient Recovery on 20-21 September 2022, the 10<sup>th</sup> ASEAN+3 HRD Forum on "Digital Skills Development and TVET for Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Growth" on 10-11 November 2022, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ROK-ASEAN Policy Sharing Workshop in the Employment and Labor Sector on 1-2 December 2022 and the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Japan High-Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies on 9-10 March 2023. We also noted the ongoing progress of the ASCC Research and Development Platform on the Future of Work and the Future of Education, which will contribute meaningfully to more informed decisions in the labour and education sectors.
44. We encouraged the enhancement of cooperation on disaster management, emergency response, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), particularly to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025. We reiterated our commitment to the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region, particularly through the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), by strengthening cooperation, through exchanges of knowledge, best practices and experiences, and capacity building through joint training and exercises to reduce disaster risks and losses, as well as to build resilience to disasters. All of which is to realise the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management which, among others, envisions ASEAN to be the global leader in disaster management.

45. 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 provide recommendations for further deepening East Asia cooperation. In this regard, we noted with appreciation the convening of the 20<sup>th</sup> EAF under the theme “25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation: Recovering Together, Growing Together toward Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Development in East Asia” hosted by Viet Nam on 19-20 December 2022 in Nha Trang, Viet Nam. The Forum underlined the need to further strengthen existing APT mechanisms/institutions and practical cooperation to bring about regional sustainable recovery, as well as to better prepare the region for emerging challenges, including food and energy crises, climate change, and public health emergencies, among others.
46. We also recognised the important contributions of the Network of East Asia Think-Tanks (NEAT) towards APT cooperation. We welcomed the outcomes of the 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> NEAT Country Coordinators’ Meeting (NEAT-CCM) that were held on 31 March 2023 and 17 July 2023 respectively and the three NEAT working group meetings on various topics held this year, with a focus on enhancing regional connectivity and food security as well as the revitalization of ASEAN Plus Three towards stronger functional cooperation and greater visibility.
47. We underscored the importance of forging closer cooperation in other areas, such as climate change, plastic pollution, women empowerment and gender equality, and humanitarian assistance, and narrowing the development gap.
48. We appreciated the initiatives to support the implementation of the AOIP as reflected in the Matrix of ASEAN Plus Three Programmes, Projects, Activities, and Initiatives Related to the Implementation of the AOIP. We were determined to further promote and mainstream the AOIP through concrete projects and activities within the APT framework. Moreover, we looked forward to following up on the ASEAN-Indo-Pacific Forum: Implementation of AOIP held this year.
49. We supported ASEAN to lead the shaping of the region's economic and security architecture and ensure that geopolitical and geostrategic dynamics will continue to bring about peace, security, stability, and prosperity for the peoples in Southeast Asia as well as in the wider Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions or the Indo-Pacific.
50. We recognized the strategic importance of ASEAN as an Epicentrum of Growth for our security, stability, and prosperity. ASEAN Plus Three will continue to serve its purpose to facilitate constructive dialogue and concrete cooperation among its members and support the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN in an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture anchored in international law. We expressed concern over intensifying geopolitical

tensions and are convinced more than ever of the value and relevance of further strengthen the APT partnership in accordance with the principles of the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). We also encouraged the revitalization of the Trilateral Mechanism to further promote peace and prosperity in the region and took note of the ROK's role and efforts as coordinator to move forward with the mechanism.

#### Regional and International Issues

51. We expressed grave concern over the launch of ballistic missiles, and usage of ballistic missile technology, by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The recent surge in the DPRK's intercontinental ballistic missile testing and ballistic missile launches and tensions in the Korean Peninsula are a worrisome development that threatens peace and stability in the region. We urged all concerned parties to resume peaceful dialogue and continue working towards the realization of lasting peace and stability in a denuclearised Korean Peninsula. Efforts toward this end, including diplomatic efforts for the creation of a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue among all concerned parties, remain our priority. We reiterated our commitment to the full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and noted international efforts to bring about the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner. We emphasised the importance of addressing issues of human rights and humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the immediate resolution of the abductions and detainees issues.
52. We recognized the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, friendship, prosperity and cooperation. We reaffirmed our shared commitment to safeguarding and promoting peace, security, and stability in the South China Sea, particularly given the recent development, therefore reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would increase tension, complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability, and reaffirmed the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety and committed to maintaining and promoting an environment conducive to the negotiation of the COC that is consistent with International Law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

#### Development in Myanmar

53. We discussed the development in Myanmar, particularly the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) and strongly condemned the continued escalation of violence, causing prolonged suffering for the people of Myanmar,

humanitarian crisis, the destruction of houses and public facilities such as schools, hospitals, markets, churches and monasteries, and adverse impacts on regional stability, particularly along the border region.

54. We reiterated our position that the 5PC remains as ASEAN's main reference to address the political crisis in Myanmar, and in that regard, we were gravely concerned by the lack of substantial progress on its implementation by the Authority in Myanmar, despite their commitment to the 5PC in April 2021.

55. We appreciated the ASEAN Chair's efforts and the intensive and inclusive engagements by the Office of the Special Envoy in ensuring concrete progress on the implementation of the 5PC and welcomed the Chair's comprehensive report and assessment in that regard. We welcomed the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus. We reaffirmed our commitment to continued and sustainable ASEAN's ongoing strategies and approach to help the people of Myanmar find peaceful, comprehensive and durable solution

#### **Other matters**

56. With a view to supporting sustainable economic growth in the region, we adopted the ASEAN Plus Three Leaders' Statement on Developing of Regional Electric Vehicle Ecosystem.

57. We looked forward to the convening of the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Summit in Lao PDR in 2024.