EAST ASIA SUMMIT LEADERS' STATEMENT ON STRENGTHENING COOPERATION AGAINST ONLINE SCAMS AND RELATED OFFENSES

WE, the participating countries of the East Asia Summit (EAS), met on 17 November 2026 in Manila, the Philippines, under the Philippines' 2026 ASEAN Chairship on the occasion of the 21st East Asia Summit;

REAFFIRMING the purposes and principles of the EAS and shared commitment of the EAS participating countries to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region;

UNDERSCORING the value of relevant international instruments to facilitate cooperation among EAS participating countries, such as the 2000 United Nations (UN) Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocols, the 2003 UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), the 2026 UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Resolution on "Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to prevent and combat fraud", as well as existing EAS and ASEAN commitments, including the 2015 EAS Leaders' Statement on Issues Related to Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies, the 2017 ASEAN Declaration to Prevent and Combat Cyber Crime, the 2019 EAS Leaders' Statement on Cooperation to Combat Transnational Crime, the 2023 ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by The Abuse of Technology, the 2023 Bangkok Digital Declaration, the 2023 Labuan Bajo Declaration on Advancing Law Enforcement Cooperation in Combating Transnational Crime, the 2024 Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Law Enforcement Cooperation Against Online Job Scams, the 2025 Melaka Declaration on Combatting Transnational Crime, and the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combatting Transnational Crime (2026-2035);

RECOGNISING the importance of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime (Ha Noi Convention) and its role as an applicable instrument among the participating parties in strengthening both regional and global legal cooperation;

REAFFIRMING the importance of ASEAN Centrality as a key principle guiding regional cooperation in addressing online scams and relevant transnational threats, and **REAFFIRMING** commitment to the objectives and principles of ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and implementation of its related Strategic Plans;

EXPRESSING grave concern over the escalating threat posed by transnational criminal organisations inflicting harm through online scams, including those originating from scam centres, and associated human trafficking that can have a disproportionate impact on people in vulnerable situations and adversely impact human rights and the well-being of the region, public trust, shared economic growth, and peace, security, and stability in the region;

ACKNOWLEDGING the exploitation of digital and other advanced technologies and digital financial platforms by increasingly sophisticated criminal actors, and the need to strengthen financial and digital systems, as well as the severe human consequences associated with scam centres and related criminal activities;

UNDERSCORING the need for strong political will and international cooperation to effectively address online scams and related offenses, as emphasised in relevant fora, including the 19th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) on 10 September 2025, the International Conference on the Global Partnership against Online Scams on 17-18 December 2025 in Bangkok, and the Global Fraud Summit on 16-17 March 2026 in Vienna;

EMPHASISING the need to address underlying drivers and other related factors of online scams, such as poverty, lack of coordinated and harmonised delivery of social protection interventions, outdated domestic laws, private and public coordination gaps, corruption, and limited economic opportunities, while **REAFFIRMING** that responses must be consistent with international law and the respective domestic legal frameworks of EAS participating countries, and uphold human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law;

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of strengthening legal cooperation efforts, taking into consideration national circumstances, and digital-capacity development to address vulnerabilities that enable online scams;

WE HEREBY DECLARE on the 21st East Asia Summit to reaffirm our shared commitment to:

1. **PROMOTE** an open, safe, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable, and peaceful digital environment, through sustained, coordinated, and action-oriented cooperation to address the growing and evolving threat of transnational organised crime, specifically online scams and related offenses;

2. **ADDRESS** the drivers and enabling factors of online scams through the formulation and improvement of policies, legislation, and regulations, in line with respective national conditions, to effectively respond to the current and evolving threats of online scams;

3. **EMPHASISE** the importance of promoting and protecting human rights and upholding the rule of law in all efforts to prevent and combat online scams and related offenses;

4. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the impact of scam centres in undermining trust in digital platforms and financial systems meant to support economic growth, and facilitate cross-border data exchanges, enhance digital connectivity, and foster innovation;

5. **SUPPORT** a multisectoral approach to prevent and combat online scams through cross-sectoral coordination among law enforcement and judicial authorities, relevant agencies, financial intelligence units, financial service providers, telecommunications regulators, the digital sector, and other relevant stakeholders, **ENCOURAGE** participation of the private sector in relevant efforts, including on anti-money laundering measures, the exchange of fraud-related online threat information, coordinated incident response, digital forensics cooperation, tracing illicit financial flows and proceeds of crime, and the investigation, freezing, seizure, and recovery of illicit proceeds and assets, while addressing relevant social and economic development drivers, in accordance with international law and the respective domestic laws and regulations of EAS participating countries;

In support of navigating our future, together, **WE HEREBY DECIDE TO**:

6. **ENCOURAGE** dialogue on information-sharing mechanisms among the law enforcement, financial, telecommunications, and regulatory authorities of EAS participating countries to facilitate the pre-emptive disruption of scam enablers, timely information-sharing and coordination, and where appropriate, joint investigations and synchronised operations against criminal networks in online scams, in accordance with international law and respective domestic laws and regulations;

7. **LEVERAGE** technologies and collaborative innovation to support efforts in addressing online scams through analysis, information-sharing and intervention, such as detection, disruption, and prevention of ongoing or emerging trends and hotspots, while developing and applying appropriate measures to ensure transparency, accountability, privacy protection, and responsible, secure, and lawful use of such technologies, consistent with international law and applicable domestic laws and regulations;

8. **ENHANCE** regional efforts to detect and combat money laundering and illicit finance associated with online scams and related offenses, such as information-sharing and multisectoral coordination, to better identify and disrupt the laundering of proceeds of crime;

9. **COOPERATE** in information exchange and the expeditious tracing, seizing, freezing, and recovery of proceeds of crime from online scams, in accordance with respective domestic legal and governance frameworks and applicable international obligations and frameworks;

10. **ENCOURAGE** the sharing of threat assessments and best practices as well as strengthening cooperation between relevant authorities in dismantling scam centres, including through joint border operations via the ASEAN Chiefs of Police (ASEANAPOL) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), public-private partnerships led by or in coordination with relevant national authorities, and prosecuting organisers, recruiters, and facilitators, and explore suitable arrangements to return the proceeds derived from scam operations, in accordance with domestic laws and applicable international obligations;

11. **STRENGTHEN** the protection of consumers and end-users of digital and financial services and platforms through enhanced safeguards, security-by-design and privacy-by-design measures, identity verification, secure authentication mechanisms, and fraud detection systems; **ENCOURAGE** collaboration with relevant experts and mechanisms, with a view to significantly reducing online scams perpetrated via these services, as appropriate, and in accordance with the respective domestic laws and regulations;

12. **ENCOURAGE** the integration of online scams risk awareness in accessible national digital literacy and financial literacy programmes to build long-term societal resilience against online scams and exploitation;

13. **PROMOTE** the role of law enforcement agencies and financial services institutions in strengthening public education and awareness efforts on online scams, including through workshops, informational campaigns, coordinated efforts between police, public-private partnership with organisations, regulatory bodies and financial institutions, and the publication of criminal justice outcomes and enforcement data, where appropriate, consistent with the respective domestic laws and regulations of EAS participating countries;

14. **STRENGTHEN** mutual legal assistance and the implementation of existing extradition agreements, related law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and international cooperation on asset recovery, including through the use of practitioner-based networks and, where appropriate, facilitate the conduct of joint or coordinated operations and investigations, in accordance with applicable domestic and international laws, to ensure effective cross-border responses to online scams and related offenses;

15. **STRENGTHEN** existing regional mechanisms and, in line with the non-punishment principle where applicable for countries that recognise it, **PROMOTE** cooperation on the screening, identification, protection, safe and timely return of victims of scam centre operations, and reintegration of survivors of trafficking in persons (TIP), especially those in vulnerable situations, and **PURSUE** cooperation to prevent re-victimisation, re-traumatisation, and continued exploitation, and encourage victims' participation in criminal investigations and prosecutions;

16. **PROMOTE** results-oriented capacity building in combating online scams for law enforcement agencies, including digital forensics and investigations, to counter, among others, sophisticated digital and other advanced technologies in online scams;

17. **INVOLVE** relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations, academia, financial institutions, and the private sector, in the development, implementation, and review of regional strategies and initiatives to prevent and combat online scams and related offenses;

18. **PROMOTE** results-oriented capacity building, exchange of good practices and coordination of relevant ASEAN mechanisms, including, but not limited to, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science, Technology and Innovation (AMMSTI), ASEAN Digital Ministers' and Senior Officials' Meetings (ADGMIN/ADGSOM), the ASEANAPOL, the ASEAN Ministerial and Senior Officials' Meetings on Transnational Crime (AMMTC/SOMTC), the ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meetings (DGICM) as well as cooperation with the INTERPOL and the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), to enhance border security and strengthen accountability mechanisms;

19. **STRENGTHEN** cross-border enforcement against online scams to facilitate the cross-border recovery of scam proceeds, and promote results-oriented capacity building in these areas, including through enhanced interoperability to support coordinated and timely responses, in accordance with relevant international and domestic laws.

ADOPTED in Manila, the Philippines, on the Seventeenth Day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.

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