



**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF
THE 17TH ASEAN PLUS THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING
26 July 2016
Vientiane, Laos**

“TURNING VISION INTO REALITY FOR A DYNAMIC ASEAN COMMUNITY”

1. The 17th Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the Peoples' Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 26 July 2016. The Meeting was chaired by His Excellency Saleumxay KOMMASITH, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR.
2. The Ministers welcomed the substantive progress and achievements in ASEAN Plus Three cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen and deepen the cooperation under the ASEAN Plus Three framework to serve as a main vehicle toward the shared vision of long term goal of building an East Asian Economic community, with ASEAN as the driving force.
3. The Ministers reiterated the importance of ASEAN's central role in the evolving regional architecture and shared the views that ASEAN Plus Three cooperation would continue to support the implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2025 to pave the way towards deeper regional integration in East Asia.
4. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the positive progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2013-2017), and looked forward to the implementation of the remaining measures under the Work Plan in timely and effective manner, especially on strengthening cooperation in addressing the impact of climate change, narrowing development gap, regional connectivity, including enhancing people-to-people connectivity, deepening financial cooperation and food security. The Ministers underscored the importance of the effective utilisation of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund to implement activities under the Work Plan. Noting that the existing Work Plan will expire by next year, the Ministers tasked the Committee of Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors of the Plus Three countries to ASEAN in Jakarta to commence a draft successor work plan with the view to the adoption by the APT Leaders in 2017.
5. The Ministers noted with appreciation the adoption of the Final Report on the Follow-up to the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG II) recommendations and the significant progress made in the development, endorsement and implementation of action plans for the 21 selected recommendations, which would pave the way towards greater ASEAN Plus Three integration, and complement the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2013-2017). The Ministers looked forward to the progress report on the follow up to the action plans for the selected recommendations, which will be submitted to the Leaders for notation at the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Summit in September 2016 in Vientiane, Laos.

6. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation in maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability and prosperity, which are necessary conditions for the continued development of the East Asian region. They also agreed to further strengthen political-security cooperation. The Ministers also emphasised the need to enhance efforts to address emerging challenges in both traditional and non-traditional security issues such as terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crime, cyber security, maritime security, climate change, disaster management, water resource management, food security, energy security, and pandemic diseases.
7. In light of this, the Ministers encouraged the effective implementation of existing regional mechanisms in addressing transnational crime such as ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Kuala Lumpur Declaration in Combating Transnational Crime, and Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia.
8. The Ministers underscored the importance of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in strengthening ASEAN Centrality in the emerging regional economic architecture. The Ministers welcomed the progress made to date and encouraged all Parties to intensify efforts to conclude the RCEP negotiations in 2016 and achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality balanced and mutually beneficial outcome.
9. The Ministers welcomed the continued growth in trade and investment cooperation between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries and expressed confidence that the regions' economies will remain resilient and maintain their positive trajectory despite the volatile global economic environment.
10. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) as part of the regional financial safety net to maintain financial stability in ASEAN and East Asia and the cooperation between global financial safety net and the regional safety net, and looked forward to the study on how the CMIM can be better integrated into the global financial safety net. To further complement CMIM, the Ministers welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) as an International Organisation, operating as an independent regional surveillance unit to monitor and analyse regional economies and support CMIM implementation. The Ministers also welcomed the finalisation of the Medium-Term Roadmap for Asian Bond Markets Initiatives (ABMI).
11. The Ministers underscored the important role of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) Agreement as a mechanism to strengthen regional food security and reducing poverty. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Plus Three Bioenergy and Food Security Framework 2015-2025 with the objective of supporting ASEAN Member States' efforts to ensure sustainable, food-secure and climate friendly bioenergy for economic and social development.
12. The Ministers acknowledged the important contributions by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as the backbone of ASEAN's economic integration and agreed to promote sustainable development of MSMEs to support the implementation of the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SMEs Development (2016-2025).
13. The Ministers underscored the importance of strengthening and broadening tourism cooperation in promoting people-to-people linkages in the East Asia Region.

The Ministers noted the progress of the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2013-2017. The Ministers welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Cooperation in January 2016 in Manila and looked forward to its full and effective implementation.

14. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of forging closer cooperation in poverty alleviation. Noting that rural development and poverty eradication are crucial to building a strong ASEAN Community, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to advance the complementarity between the implementation of UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to uplift the living standards of people in ASEAN and the Plus Three countries over the next decades.

15. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers appreciated the Plus Three countries in supporting ASEAN in the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) and also encouraged China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to work closely with the ASEAN Coordinating Committee (ACCC) to further realize the MPAC and foster the implementation of Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Plus Three Partnership on Connectivity. Noting that both financing mobilisation and quality infrastructure are important factors in moving the ASEAN Connectivity agenda forward, the Ministers welcomed the progress of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as well as the proposed Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure to address infrastructure-financing needs in the region.

16. The Ministers took note of the convening of the 11th Annual Meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Training Institutions of ASEAN Plus Three countries, which was held in Seoul, Korea on 27-29 April 2016. They underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation among the APT countries in the field of education and training for diplomats, who can play an active role in facilitating the process of East Asian community building

17. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation in education at the regional level. The Ministers noted the progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Plus Three Plan of Action on Education (2010-2017) and in the development of the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility.

18. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the implementation of the ASEAN Conference on Civil Service Matters Plus Three (ACCSM+3) Work Plan (2012-2015) and looked forward to the adoption of the ACCSM+3 Work Plan 2016-2020 at the Third Heads of Civil Service Meeting for ACCSM+3 to be held in November 2016 in Manila to further promote good governance.

19. The Ministers noted the progress of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation in health and underscored the importance of promoting cooperation in combating communicable and emerging infectious diseases and public health emergencies in the region. They encouraged stronger cooperation to ensure timely responses and prevention of such diseases. The Ministers looked forward to the continuous support and assistance from the Plus Three countries to achieving the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda and the ASEAN Plus Three Universal Health Coverage Network (UHC).

20. The Ministers highlighted the importance of the contribution of the ASEAN-China Centre, ASEAN-Japan Centre and ASEAN-ROK Centre in promoting trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. The Ministers noted the

successful convening of the Seventh Meeting among the Secretaries-General of the ASEAN-China, ASEAN-Japan and ASEAN-ROK Centres in April 2016 in Tokyo and encouraged more coordination among the three Centres in order to further contribute to the enhancement of greater cooperation between ASEAN and the East Asian Region under the ASEAN Plus Three framework.

21. The Ministers 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. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the 14th EAF in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 9-10 June 2016 with the theme “Deepening East Asia Integration towards East Asia Economic Community”, to be submitted to the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Summit for notation. The Ministers welcomed China’s proposal to host the 15th EAF in 2017.

22. Considering the important contribution of the Network of East Asia Think-tanks (NEAT) towards the APT cooperation process, the Ministers welcomed the convening of the 24th Country Coordinator Meeting (CCM) of NEAT in Thailand in March 2016 and looked forward to the convening of the 25th NEAT CCM/14th Annual Conference in Thailand.

23. The Ministers underscored the importance of forging closer cooperation in the areas of agriculture, forestry, food and energy security, education, climate change, water resources management, natural resources conservation and disaster risk reduction and management.

24. The Ministers discussed the developments on the Korean Peninsula and underlined the importance of maintaining peace, stability and security in the region. The Ministers expressed concerns over the recent developments on the Korean Peninsula, including the nuclear test and launches using ballistic missile technology by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), which are in violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The Ministers also highlighted the importance of trust-building activities on the Peninsula, and the need to fully comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions, including UNSC resolution 2270 and for all parties to comply with commitments under the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. The Meeting underlined the importance of creating necessary conditions for the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks, which would help pave the way toward peaceful denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

25. The Ministers shared concerns on the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices and stressed the need to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing and to develop a well-measured and holistic approach to address this challenge.

26. The Ministers discussed preparations for the upcoming 19th ASEAN Plus Three Summit, to be held in September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

27. The Ministers noted next year is 20th anniversary of APT and looked forward to the convening of the 18th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, to be held in the Philippines in 2017.

