



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE 27TH ASEAN SUMMIT

KUALA LUMPUR, 21 NOVEMBER 2015

“OUR PEOPLE, OUR COMMUNITY, OUR VISION”

We, the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member States, gathered for the 27th ASEAN Summit, held under Malaysia's Chairmanship of ASEAN with the theme “Our People, Our Community, Our Vision”, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 21 November 2015.

2. We had productive and extensive deliberations reflective of the spirit of Malaysia's Chairmanship, namely to create a truly people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community comprising all areas of political and security cooperation, economic growth and socio-cultural development.

3. We welcomed the progress of community building driven by the eight priorities for ASEAN outlined by Malaysia during her Chairmanship in 2015, namely to formally establish the ASEAN Community; to develop the ASEAN Community's post-2015 vision; to steer ASEAN closer to its peoples; to strengthen the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region; to expand intra-ASEAN trade and investments; to strengthen ASEAN's institutions; to promote regional peace and security through moderation; and to enhance ASEAN's role as a global player.

4. We signed/adopted the following documents as the outcomes of the Summit:

- 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Community
- Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together
- ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN
- ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change 2015
- Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection
- Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education
- Regional Plan of Actions on Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Regional Plan of Actions on Elimination of Violence Against Children

- Declaration on ASEAN Post-2015 Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Agenda.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASEAN COMMUNITY

5. We welcomed the formal establishment of the ASEAN Community 2015 on 31 December 2015 comprising the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), which is a culmination of a five-decade long effort of community building since the signing of the Bangkok Declaration in 1967.

6. Following the commitment made by ASEAN Leaders on the establishment of the ASEAN Community in the Cha-am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community (2009-2015), we were pleased with the successful implementation of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015 comprising the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprints, as well as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Strategic Framework and IAI Work Plan II (2009-2015) and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. These documents have guided our efforts to realise the establishment of the ASEAN Community 2015.

7. Recognising that ASEAN Community building is an on-going process, we agreed to further consolidate ASEAN as a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible Community for the wellbeing of our peoples. We reiterated our resolve and commitment to promote our peoples' participation in the community building process so that they can benefit fully from ASEAN integration.

8. We reaffirmed our commitment and adherence to the ASEAN Charter, which confers legal personality on ASEAN and provides the institutional framework for ASEAN to function as a rules-based regional organisation to advance ASEAN's goal of lasting peace, security and stability, sustained economic growth and shared prosperity and social progress. We urged ASEAN Member States to ratify all outstanding legal instruments under the ASEAN Charter in a timely manner. We also reaffirmed our commitment to promote rule of law, good governance and anti-corruption, as part of a rules-based Community.

9. Recognising the need for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs, inter alia, to address cross-cutting issues and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities, we underscored the importance of strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Organs and Bodies and tasked the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) to continue implementing the recommendations made by the High Level Task Force on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs within the stipulated timeframes.

ASEAN 2025: FORGING AHEAD TOGETHER

10. We were pleased to adopt *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*, comprising the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the ASEAN Political-Security Blueprint Community 2025, the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025. We also looked forward to the adoption of the IAI Work Plan III and the ASEAN Connectivity 2025 in 2016, which will be an integral part of the *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*. In this context, we commended the work of the High Level Task Force on ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision.

11. We were gratified that *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together* charts a forward looking course for ASEAN in the coming decade building upon and deepening the integration process to bring about a truly rules-based, people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN Community. We pledged to realise the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 through the full implementation of the three Blueprints.

12. We were committed to elevate our political-security cooperation to realise a rules-based, inclusive and resilient community in which our peoples enjoy human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice, embrace the values of tolerance and moderation and uphold ASEAN fundamental principles, shared values and norms as well as live in a safe and secure environment with enhanced capacity to respond comprehensively and effectively to existing and emerging challenges. This will serve us well as we progress in a dynamic region where ASEAN enhances its unity and centrality in the evolving regional architecture and plays a constructive role globally.

13. We were committed to intensify our economic cooperation to create a deeply integrated and highly cohesive regional economy as well as a competitive, innovative and dynamic community that sustains high economic growth and robust productivity while enhancing connectivity and sectoral cooperation. We were determined to achieve a more resilient and inclusive community that engenders equitable development and inclusive growth as well as a global ASEAN that fosters a more systematic and coherent approach in our external economic relations.

14. We were committed to enhance our socio-cultural cooperation to realise a community that engages and benefits the peoples of ASEAN and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic in which our peoples participate in ASEAN processes, enjoy higher quality of life and equitable access to opportunities, live in a sustainable environment, with enhanced capacity to adapt and respond to threats and challenges, as well as innovate and proactively contribute to the global community.

15. In realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, we underlined the urgency to strengthen ASEAN institutional capacity and increase ASEAN institutional presence at the national, regional and international levels. We tasked all ASEAN Organs and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to implement *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*.

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY

16. We noted with satisfaction the achievement in implementing the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint (2009-2015), which has deepened and expanded political and security cooperation as well as paved the way for the establishment of the ASEAN Community by end of this year.

17. We reaffirmed the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in Southeast Asia (TAC) as the key code of conduct governing inter-state relations in the region and a foundation for the maintenance of regional peace and stability. We resolved to further promote the purpose and principles contained in the TAC and agreed to further deliberate on the applications for accession to the TAC in accordance with its revised guidelines.

18. We reiterated our commitment to preserve the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter. We agreed to intensify ongoing efforts of the state parties to the SEANWFZ Treaty and the Nuclear Weapon States to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the SEANWFZ Treaty pertaining to the signing and ratifying of the Protocol to that Treaty at the earliest to support its full and effective implementation including through the Plan of Action to Strengthen the Implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty 2013-2017. We welcomed the adoption of the 70th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on the SEANWFZ Treaty. We also welcomed the designation of ASEAN Network of Nuclear Regulatory Agencies (ASEANTOM) as an ASEAN Sectoral Body under the APSC Pillar in Annex 1 of the ASEAN Charter.

ASEAN in the Evolving Regional Architecture

19. In light of the changing regional strategic landscape, we reiterated our commitment to maintain and enhance ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture and in our engagement with external parties as stated in the “Maintaining and Enhancing ASEAN Centrality: Revised Work Plan” adopted by our Foreign Ministers in New York in September 2015. We highlighted the need to further develop a rules-based regional architecture, by promoting the purposes and principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, as well as in other instruments and declarations, such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ), the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea

(DOC), and the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (EAS Bali Principles), in order to preserve and enhance peace, stability, security and prosperity in the region and beyond.

Global Movement of Moderates

20. We reaffirmed the importance of moderation as an established ASEAN value which emphasises tolerance, mutual understanding, dialogue, respect for diversity and inclusiveness towards achieving peace, security and harmony in the region, in line with the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates adopted at the 26th ASEAN Summit, held in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi, Malaysia on 27 April 2015. We were also encouraged by activities initiated by relevant stakeholders and civil society actors including the Global Movements of Moderates Foundation (GMMF) in moving forward the philosophy of moderation in ASEAN as an all-encompassing approach not only in resolving differences and conflicts peacefully but also for ensuring sustainable and inclusive development and equitable growth as well as promoting social harmony and mutual understanding amongst countries and regions.

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)

21. We noted with satisfaction the successful implementation of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Five-year Work Plan 2010-2015 to support the full implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD. We commended the on-going efforts by AICHR to promote awareness of the AHRD and the role of AICHR as the overarching human rights institution in ASEAN for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people in the region. Recognising the cross-cutting nature of human rights, we called on AICHR to effectively implement its new Five-year Work Plan (2016-2020) including through close collaboration with other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and stakeholders, as provided for in the Terms of Reference of AICHR in order to mainstream human rights principles in the 3 pillars of ASEAN.

ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

22. We appreciated the contribution by ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) to the ASEAN community-building process and welcomed the outcome of the 36th AIPA from 6 – 12 September 2015 in Kuala Lumpur. We recognised the important role of AIPA to reach out to their respective constituencies with the view to enhance the awareness on the significance of the establishment of ASEAN Community and the benefits of integration. We also encouraged further contribution of AIPA to promoting a rules-based ASEAN Community.

ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)

23. We recognised the significant role of the ASEAN Defence Ministers in the realisation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community. We commended the progress of defence cooperation among ASEAN Member States as well as with external partners through the ADMM-Plus' six Experts' Working Groups (EWGs) covering humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter-terrorism, maritime security, military medicine, humanitarian mine action, and peacekeeping operations. We looked forward to maintaining the strong commitment for practical cooperation through the four field training exercises that would be conducted in 2016. We noted the establishment of the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM). We welcomed the outcomes of the ADMM Retreat and the Third ADMM Plus held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 2-5 November 2015 during which the Defence Ministers had fruitful discussions and proposed new proposals to better enable the ADMM and ADMM-Plus to deal with complex security challenges.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)

24. We reaffirmed our commitment to combating transnational crimes and noted the outcomes of the 10th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (10th AMMTC) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 28 September-1 October 2015. We welcomed the decision to convene the AMMTC annually, beginning 2017 and the inclusion of illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber and people smuggling as the new areas of cooperation under the purview of AMMTC.

25. In addressing the growing threat of radicalisation and violent extremism to the ASEAN region, we noted the outcomes of the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 2 October 2015. We reiterated the need to strengthen cooperation to mitigate the spread of radicalisation and extremism in a holistic manner.

26. We signed the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) in combating trafficking in persons in the region. We also looked forward to the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (APA) in a holistic manner and the deepening of cross-sectoral cooperation in addressing trafficking in persons.

27. Recognising the urgency of addressing the increasing challenges posed by the irregular movement of persons in Southeast Asia, we underscored the outcomes of the Emergency ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) Concerning Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia held in Kuala Lumpur on 2 July 2015 and the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean held in Bangkok on 29 May 2015 to address this issue. We looked forward to the convening of the 2nd Special Meeting on Irregular Migration

in the Indian Ocean in Bangkok on 3 December 2015. We noted the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia at the 10th AMMTC. We further encouraged the AMMTC to expedite the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the trust fund to support the humanitarian and relief efforts to deal with challenges resulting from irregular movement of persons in the region.

28. As deeper regional integration and enhanced connectivity can be misused to promote illegal cross-border activities, we agreed to enhance cooperation on border management including through strengthening information sharing and intelligence exchange in order to safeguard our region from transnational crimes and cross-border challenges.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD)

29. Recognising the threat of drugs to the ASEAN region, we welcomed the outcomes of the 4th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) held in Langkawi, Malaysia on 28-29 October 2015, which adopted an ASEAN Position Statement reiterating our commitment to a zero tolerance approach to realise the regional vision of a Drug Free ASEAN. We agreed to the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced approach in addressing the drug problem involving both demand and supply reduction measures as well as strengthening the areas of enforcement, preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation, research and alternative development. The Position Statement also reaffirms the sovereign right and responsibility of each country to decide on the best approach to address its drug problem, taking into consideration the contexts and norms of its society. We agreed to the delivery of an ASEAN Statement at the 59th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2016 and at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem in April 2016. We also look forward to Singapore hosting the 5th AMMD in 2016. We also welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Narcotics Coordination Cooperation Centre (ASEAN-NARCO) in Bangkok to strengthen ASEAN cooperation, especially on information sharing and intelligence exchange among drug control and law enforcement agencies in the region.

ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting (ALAWMM)

30. We noted the progress made by the ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting (ALAWMM) in developing and establishing programmes for mutual support and assistance among ASEAN Member States in the development of strategies for strengthening the rule of law, judicial systems and legal infrastructure. In this regard, we welcomed the outcomes of the 9th ALAWMM held in Bali, Indonesia on 22 October 2015 which, among others, reiterated ASEAN Member States commitment to work towards elevating the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) into an ASEAN instrument and noted with satisfaction that ASEAN Member States shall endeavour to make extradition mechanisms available between them, taking into consideration the principles set out in the Model

ASEAN Extradition Treaty where appropriate, the possibility for a legally binding ASEAN Extradition Treaty.

ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR)

31. We emphasised the importance of promoting conflict resolution and conflict management to enhance peace, security and stability in the region. We noted the progress in the work of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) and encouraged its Governing Council and Advisory Board to fully operationalise the Institute. We noted the convening of AIPR Workshop on Women's Participation in Peace Processes and Conflict Resolution in Cebu City, Philippines on 18 and 19 March 2015 and looked forward to the convening of AIPR Workshop on the Plight of Women and Children in Conflict Situation in Taygaytay, Philippines from 7-9 December 2015.

ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC)

32. We noted the successful outcomes of the Second Regional Seminar on the Establishment of ARMAC: Collaboration towards Operationalization, on 14-15 August 2015 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. We took note of the completion of the nomination by all ASEAN Member States of their representatives to the Steering Committee of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC).

ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF)

33. We welcomed cooperation and constructive dialogues and consultations on maritime issues of common interest and concern including on maritime security, marine environment and conservation, search and rescue, maritime connectivity, maritime surveillance, port security, illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, and sustainable management of maritime resources. We noted the outcomes of the 6th ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the 4th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) in Manado, Indonesia on 9 and 10 September 2015.

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

34. The economic performance of ASEAN remains relatively stable despite the volatile global economic environment such as, the impact of the drop in global oil prices, the depreciation of regional currencies against the US dollar and the slowing growth in China. We expressed our confidence that the forecasted real GDP growth rate of 4.4 per cent will be realised this year. With the anticipated improvements in the global economic environment the region's GDP is projected to grow by 4.9 per cent in 2016.

35. Despite the challenging economic environment, we remain firmly committed to further our regional integration efforts. The continued broadening and deepening of economic integration will be critical for ASEAN to attract the

much needed foreign direct investments (FDI) as well as private investment to fund infrastructure development in the region.

36. We were pleased with the achievements of the regional economic integration efforts as demonstrated by the near completion of implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2015, and were also pleased to formally announce the establishment of the AEC. We also note that outstanding measures will be implemented as a priority under the AEC post-2015 agenda for completion in 2016. In this context, we welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Integration Report 2015 and AEC 2015: Progress and Key Achievements, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the progress and impact of the implementation of the AEC Blueprint and a reader-friendly reference on the AEC, respectively.

37. The establishment of the AEC has contributed significantly to the reduction in poverty rate, improvements in the overall well-being of the peoples of ASEAN, narrowing of development gap, strengthened economic development and the expansion of extra and intra ASEAN trade and investment. ASEAN's global trade reached a new record level of US\$2.53 trillion in 2014 as compared with US\$1.61 trillion in 2007. FDI inflows into the region have been steadily growing over the years to reach US\$136.2 billion in 2014.

38. We were pleased to note that intra-ASEAN trade and investments are gaining strong growth momentum. Intra-ASEAN trade reached US\$608.3 billion in 2014 or 24.1 per cent of the total trade of the region, making ASEAN the region's largest market by partner. At US\$24.4 billion, intra-ASEAN investment accounted for 17.9 per cent of the total FDI inflows to the region, the second largest by source. We expect that ASEAN's trade and investment in 2015 will maintain its momentum as in the past years. The combined GDP of the region reached US\$2.57 trillion in 2014, and average GDP per capita US\$4,135, a near doubling of the 2007 figures.

39. We reaffirmed our strong commitment to continue the process of deepening economic integration over the next 10 years under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. This is an ambitious successor document outlining the strategic measures that will be implemented by the region over the next 10 years to achieve an AEC in 2025 with the following main characteristics: (i) A Highly Integrated and Cohesive Economy; (ii) A Competitive, Innovative, and Dynamic ASEAN; (iii) Enhanced Connectivity and Sectoral Cooperation; (iv) A Resilient, Inclusive, People-Oriented, and People-Centred ASEAN; and (v) A Global ASEAN.

40. We welcomed the adoption and launch of the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2016-2025(SAP SMED 2025). The SAP SMED 2025 will focus on promoting productivity, technology and innovation, increasing access to finance, enhancing market access and internationalisation, enhancing policy and regulatory environment as well as promoting entrepreneurship and human capital development. The Plan aims to strengthen microenterprises by

enhancing their competitiveness and resilience. Effective implementation of the SAP SMED 2025 will require the support of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the region. Collectively MSMEs can advance ASEAN integration and benefit from regional supply chain integration under ASEAN's free trade agreements.

41. We also reaffirmed our commitment to strategically adopt and implement innovation to drive growth and development in the region. ASEAN's efforts in creating an innovative, competitive, vibrant, sustainable and economically integrated region will be supported by the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science Technology and Innovation (APASTI 2016-2025). Given the critical role of technology adaptation and diffusion and innovation in ASEAN's productivity growth and long-term competitiveness, we acknowledged the need for a concerted effort to improve innovation and technological capabilities.

42. We also welcomed the completion of various other AEC-related sectoral plans to operationalise the strategic measures envisioned in the AEC Blueprint 2025, and looked forward to the completion of the remaining AEC-related post-2015 sectoral plans.

43. We agreed that ASEAN will continue to accord high priority to trade facilitation initiatives, especially on the efforts towards developing a comprehensive action plan on trade facilitation through the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Joint Consultative Committee (ATF-JCC). The ATF-JCC will comprise the public and private sector, with the latter's inclusion to promote a more proactive role in identifying specific issues as well as to facilitate ways to reduce or eliminate non-tariff barriers in the region. In this context, we also welcomed the ratification of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement by Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

44. We also welcomed other on-going efforts in enhancing trade facilitation through various initiatives, which include the ASEAN Self-Certification Scheme to enable certified economic operators to self-certify the origin of the goods for preferential tariff concession under ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement, the establishment of ASEAN Trade Repository System, and the establishment of the ASEAN Single Window. These initiatives encapsulated ASEAN's efforts in enhancing transparency and access to information on the regulatory environment of each ASEAN Member State, and greatly facilitate doing business in the region.

45. We welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Solutions for Investments, Services and Trade (ASSIST), which is a consultative, internet-based facility and a non-binding mechanism for an expedited and effective resolution of operational problems encountered by businesses and enterprises operating in the region or related to the implementation of ASEAN economic agreements. This will provide a much needed avenue for the private sector to raise their concerns on doing business in the region through a more systematic, timely and cost-effective manner.

46. Noting the need to continuously enhance the competitiveness of the region and to minimise barriers to trade, ASEAN remains firmly committed to the removal of non-tariff barriers. In this context, we welcomed the on-going efforts by the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality to accelerate the harmonisation of standards and technical requirements mutual recognition arrangements and harmonisation of regulatory regimes to facilitate greater free flow of goods in the region.

47. We recognised that the services sector contributes substantially to both output and employment in ASEAN economies, and that the services sector is expected to provide the growth momentum to the region. The liberalisation of the services sector remains a priority. We welcomed the progress made in the finalization of the Protocol to implement the 10th ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) Package, which incorporates the timeline and staging plan for 2015-2017.

48. We also acknowledged the completion of eight (8) Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for Engineering Services, Nursing Services, Architectural Services, Accounting Services, Dental Practitioners, Medical Practitioners, Surveying and Tourism Professionals, which contributed to facilitating free flow of services through temporary movement of professionals and skilled workers. Recognising that MRAs are essential in the growth of services sector, we also looked forward to the creation of new MRAs or mutual recognition of qualifications for professionals and skilled workers, where applicable, to further enhance ongoing mechanisms, in the context of temporary movement of workers, toward achieving the ultimate goal of services sector liberalisation.

49. We welcomed the completion of the revision of the reservations lists of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar under the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement, which contributes towards further improvements in their respective investment regimes. We also welcomed the on-going efforts by ASEAN Member States to further improve their investment regimes through economic reforms and other investment facilitation measures. In this context, we welcomed the launch of the ASEAN Investment Report 2015.

50. We noted that 8 ASEAN Member States have enacted competition laws in line with the objective of fostering a culture of fair competition, institutions and laws. We were pleased with this progress and the ASEAN activities to strengthen the legal environment for competition and core competencies in enforcement. We welcomed the ASEAN Competition Plan 2016-2025 towards more effective competition regimes, a more competition-aware region and greater regional cooperation and harmonisation.

51. We recognised that the ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Action Plan 2011-2015 is a key component designed to transform ASEAN into an innovative and competitive region through the use of intellectual property and noted the good progress made in its implementation. We were pleased with the adoption

of the successor ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Action Plan 2016-2025, which promotes modern business models and practices that enable provision of efficient and effective “world class” services and enhanced regional mechanisms to support the IP eco-systems as well as IP asset creation and commercialisation.

52. We recognised consumer protection as an integral part of a modern, efficient, effective and fair market place, and noted that 9 ASEAN Member States have put in place consumer protection laws. Moving forward, we were pleased to note that the Strategic ASEAN Action Plan for Consumer Protection 2016-2025 will further allow ASEAN to work towards a common consumer protection framework, promote confidence among ASEAN citizens in the AEC, integrate consumer concerns into other ASEAN policies and maximise the benefits of the AEC for consumers and businesses.

53. We noted the progress of the ASEAN Pathfinder Project, which aims to address the challenges faced by businesses through facilitated direct engagement between companies and governments. This project will enable ASEAN companies to not only expand into each other’s market but also allow companies to form strategic alliances and joint ventures. This could be the start of a series of Pathfinder clinics.

54. We recognised the need to establish a platform to foster networking and share best practices amongst young entrepreneurs in the region to promote youth’s participation in entrepreneurial activities. We welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Network (AYEN) which is designed to promote the inclusion of youth in the AEC through the ASEAN Business Advisory Council’s flagship programmes.

ASEAN Business Advisory Council

55. We welcomed the enhanced role of the ASEAN-Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) in the regional integration efforts, including engaging and promoting the AEC to various stakeholders in the region and engaging with foreign business councils to promote the AEC. We welcomed the valuable contribution and inputs provided to further deepen economic integration under the AEC Blueprint 2025. We congratulated the Council for successfully hosting the 2015 ASEAN Business and Investment Summit and the ASEAN Business Awards, which will spur domestic companies, especially MSMEs to be more innovative and competitive. We expressed hope that the Council will continue to assume a more proactive role in working closely with the governments in the region to enhance ASEAN’s economic competitiveness.

External Economic Relations

56. We welcomed the progress made in advancing our ASEAN Plus One Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), including the signing of the Third Protocol to Amend

the ASEAN-Korea Trade in Goods Agreement and the implementation of the First Protocol to Amend the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA. We noted the substantial progress made in the negotiations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement. We commended the RCEP Economic Ministers for their timely guidance through two ministerial level Meetings held in Kuala Lumpur in July and August 2015 to finalise the modalities for the core areas of negotiations covering trade in goods, trade in services and investment. Following this breakthrough, substantive negotiations in the core areas, as well as text-based negotiations, have intensified. We tasked our Ministers and negotiators to further intensify their efforts and we looked forward to the early conclusion of the RCEP negotiations.

ASEAN Global Leaders Dialogue

57. We noted that the vast majority of the infrastructure investments in the region have been led by governments with limited involvement of institutional investors. We acknowledged that the projected infrastructure needs of the region cannot be solely funded by governments and other alternatives ways have to be explored. In this context, we were pleased with the dialogue with global investors aimed at garnering private investors to fund ASEAN infrastructure development projects.

ASEAN Finance Ministers Meeting (AFMM)

58. We welcomed the first joint meeting of the ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (AFMGM) held in March 2015, and endorsed its establishment as a permanent mechanism to further enhance cooperation on regional macroeconomic policy and financial integration, where appropriate. We were pleased to note the AFMGM's significant progress in achieving the goals of the AEC in 2015, including the conclusion of the ASEAN Banking Integration Framework (ABIF) and operationalisation of the ASEAN Framework for Cross-border Offerings of Collective Investment Schemes (CIS). We welcomed the AFMGM's continued commitment to developing plans for post-2015 ASEAN financial integration, particularly on the further liberalisation of the insurance sector and the development of a five-year Action Plan to enhance regional capital market connectivity. We also welcomed the AFMGM's decision to include financial inclusion as a policy priority in ASEAN finance cooperation.

ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF)

59. We noted with satisfaction the achievements made in ASEAN cooperation in food, agriculture and forestry, particularly the adoption of a number of ASEAN standards, guidelines and good practices by the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) to ensure safe and good quality agriculture produce and to facilitate ASEAN trade of these produce. We welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025, with the vision to realise "competitive, inclusive, resilient and sustainable

food, agriculture, and forestry (FAF) sectors integrated with the global economy, based on a single market and production base contributing to food and nutrition security, and prosperity in the ASEAN Community”. We also welcomed the Statement of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry on Food Security and Nutrition which sets out the key strategies for action at both the national and regional levels to effectively address the present and emerging threats to food security and to meet adequate nutrition for all populations in ASEAN.

ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM)

60. We were pleased with the adoption of the first phase of the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC 2016-2025) covering the period of 2016-2020, which shall be the blueprint for enhancing ASEAN energy security cooperation and for moving towards greater regional connectivity and integration. We recognised that the new APAEC builds on the achievements of past APAECs by sharpening and deepening cooperation on seven strategic areas, namely (i) the ASEAN Power Grid by initiating multilateral electricity trade in at least one ASEAN sub-region; (ii) the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline by enhancing connectivity via pipelines and regasification terminals; (iii) coal and clean coal technologies; (iv) energy efficiency and conservation by reducing energy intensity in ASEAN; (v) renewable energy by increasing its share in the ASEAN energy mix; (vi) regional policy and planning; and (vii) civilian nuclear energy by building capabilities on nuclear energy and safety. We noted the draft Operationalisation Manual for the ASEAN Petroleum Security Agreement (APSA)-Coordinated Emergency Response Measures (CERM) to address emergencies or possible disruptions in oil and gas supplies in the region, expected to be completed prior to the Special Senior Officials’ Meeting on Energy (SOME) in January 2016.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Minerals (AMMin)

61. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Minerals Cooperation Action Plan (AMCAP)-III (2016-2025), Phase 1 (2016-2020) which will further enhance ASEAN mineral sector dynamism with revitalised strategies towards boosting trade and investment in minerals, promoting environmentally and socially sustainable mineral development, strengthening institutional and human capabilities in the ASEAN Minerals Sector and maintaining an efficient and up-to-date ASEAN Minerals Database. We also noted the adoption of the Rules and Procedures for the ASEAN Minerals Trust Fund (AMTF) to support the implementation of the ASEAN mineral cooperation programme.

ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting (ATM)

62. We were pleased with the signing of the Protocol to Implement the Ninth Package of Commitments on Air Transport Services under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services and the endorsement of the ASEAN Transport Strategic Plan 2016-2025 and the ASEAN Regional Road Safety Strategy. The ASEAN Transport Strategic Plan serves as a guiding regional

policy document towards greater connectivity, efficiency, integration, safety and sustainability of ASEAN transport. We welcomed the entry into force of Protocol 2 of the ASEAN-China Air Transport Agreement on the Fifth Freedom Traffic Rights on 8 September 2015, which will further liberalise the air services regime between ASEAN and China. We looked forward to the ratification of the ASEAN open skies agreements by the remaining ASEAN Member States by 2015 in support of the AEC, and to deepening aviation cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners.

ASEAN Telecommunications & Information Technology Ministers Meeting (TELMIN)

63. We were pleased with the successful completion of the ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2015 and its contribution to the creation of an empowering and transformational ICT for an inclusive, vibrant and integrated ASEAN. We looked forward to the adoption of the new ASEAN ICT Masterplan 2020 by the end of the year which will guide ASEAN ICT cooperation from 2016-2020 towards a digitally-enabled economy, which is innovative, transformative and secure; and to enable a sustainable, inclusive and integrated ASEAN Community.

Regional Growth Area

64. We noted the increased cooperation between ASEAN and the various sub-regional cooperation mechanisms at the secretariat level in the effort to align sub-regional initiatives with regional commitments. Recognising the important role that sub-regional growth areas play in realising the ASEAN Community and narrowing of development gap, we looked forward to a strategic approach in the strengthening of institutional linkages and improved coordination in the new Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan.

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

65. We acknowledged the report of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council to the 27th ASEAN Summit and noted the successful implementation of the ASCC Blueprint (2009-2015) which aimed to enhance the wellbeing, livelihood and welfare of the peoples in the Southeast Asia region.

66. We welcomed the convening of the 14th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council (14th ASCC Council), which was held on 7 October 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and noted with appreciation the adoption of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025. We strongly believed that the elements and strategic measures contained in the new ASCC Blueprint would pave way for a better living environment for the peoples of ASEAN.

ASEAN Peoples' Award

67. We acknowledged the achievements of the 10 National Recipients for the

ASEAN Peoples' Award who have made excellent and inspiring contributions within the broader context of ASEAN's community building effort, including, among others, in the areas of political, social and cultural development, economic integration, women and children, youth and livelihood, education, volunteerism, community development and empowerment of peoples.

ASEAN Ministers Meeting On Rural Development And Poverty Eradication (AMMRDPE)

68. We reiterated our commitment towards community empowerment for sustainable livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN. We noted with satisfaction the successful implementation of the ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2011-2015), which has guided the efforts by ASEAN Member States to support sustainable development of rural areas and contributed to the eradication of rural poverty and food insecurity in the ASEAN region. We were pleased with the outcome of the 9th ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication that was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 13-17 October 2015 and encouraged the ASEAN Member States to focus attention on the rural poor in terms of enhancing productivity and raising incomes, providing social services and social protection, improving access to and quality of important rural infrastructure, providing incentives and expanding remunerative employment for farmers and fisher folks. We also noted with appreciation the adoption in principle of the ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2016-2020).

69. We noted the Report of the ASEAN Regional Assessment on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Achievement and Post-2015 Development Priorities which highlights the progress across ASEAN Member States and targets in achieving the MDGs, and key challenges and opportunities to be seized in sustaining development in the region in post-2015 era.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment (AMME)

70. We underlined the importance of effective cooperation on the environment and climate change at the national, regional and global levels. We noted with satisfaction the outcome of the 13th ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Environment that was held in Ha Noi, Vietnam from 26 – 30 October 2015. We also adopted the Declaration on ASEAN Post-2015 Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Agenda that reiterates ASEAN's commitment to addressing existing and emerging environment and climate change challenges.

71. We adopted the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change and looked forward to a successful outcome of the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in December 2015 reflecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances and in support of sustainable development.

72. We discussed the recent haze affecting several ASEAN Member States. We reiterated our commitment to the objectives and principles of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP). We noted the outcome of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the AATHP on 29 October 2015 in Hanoi, Vietnam. We agreed to share information, subject to respective national laws and policies, and in accordance with AATHP. We looked forward to the early establishment of and operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control in Indonesia. We also noted the initiatives by the Sub-regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution (MSC) countries and encouraged them to take the necessary actions in order to operationalise the ASEAN Sub-regional Haze Monitoring System.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD)

73. We adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN, which underscored our commitment to promote a healthy, active and productive environment for older persons in the ASEAN region. We also adopted three regional frameworks to materialise the leaders' commitment: the Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the 2013 ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, which envisioned the uplifting of the quality of life of ASEAN peoples by 2025, the Regional Plan of Actions on Elimination of Violence against Women and the Regional Plan of Actions on Elimination of Violence against Children, which are to implement the 2013 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children in ASEAN.

74. We adopted the Regional Framework and Action Plan to Implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection. We tasked the Ministers to work towards the strengthening of social protection and enhancing cooperation to address the needs and interests as well as provide equal access to opportunities and raise the quality of life and standard of living for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities in the ASEAN Community.

75. We noted the outcome of the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) in Manila, Philippines from 18 – 23 October 2015 and tasked the Ministers to work towards the strengthening of social protection and enhance cooperation to address the needs and interests as well as equitable equal access to opportunities and raise the quality of life and standard of living for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities in the ASEAN Community.

ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)

76. We adopted the Regional Plan of Action on Elimination of Violence against Women (RPA-EVAW) and the Regional Plan of Action on Elimination of Violence against Children (RPA-EVAC) that reflect the zero tolerance of ASEAN on all forms of violence against women and children. We tasked the ACWC and other relevant ASEAN Bodies across the three pillars to take actions to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and children in their respective sectors. We noted the annual public campaign on anti-violence against women and girls by the ACWC to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November.

ASEAN Conference on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM)

77. Noting the importance of good governance in promoting sustainable development, we recognised the need for civil service reform and greater engagement with the peoples of ASEAN, we were pleased that the Putrajaya Joint Declaration on ASEAN Post-2015 Priorities - Towards an ASEAN Citizen-Centric Civil Service was signed during the inaugural ASEAN Heads of Civil Service Retreat on 17 November 2015. The Putrajaya Joint Declaration demonstrated the mission of the Civil Service of ASEAN Member States towards a citizen-centric civil service to support the ASEAN Community beyond 2015. We applauded the ACCSM for the completion of the ACCSM Work Plan 2008-2015 and ACCSM+3 Work Plan 2012-2015, and updating the themes of the six ASEAN Resource Centres (ARCs) to ensure responsiveness to the capacity building needs of ASEAN Member States.

78. We were also pleased to note that in conjunction with the Retreat, two (2) other events were also held concurrently, namely the ASEAN Civil Service Innovation Conference (ACSIC) on 18 and 19 November 2015 and the first ASEAN Civil Service Games (ACS-Games) from 16 – 19 November 2015. These events were successful in forging closer ties and bonding among the Civil Service of ASEAN Member States, through sports and the sharing of best practices and innovations.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW)

79. We were pleased with the outcome of the 2nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) that was held in Manila, the Philippines on 23 October 2015 and reaffirmed our commitment to take concrete steps in addressing gender inequalities in the political-security, economic and socio-cultural spheres by mainstreaming gender perspective. We noted the successful implementation of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) Work Plan for 2011-2015 and adoption by AMMW of the ACW Work Plan for 2016-2020 to guide future efforts in sustaining the gains and overcoming the persistent and emerging challenges in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women.

80. We noted with appreciation the convening of the Forum on Voices of ASEAN Women: Exploring Business Opportunity for Rural Women for the Spouses of Heads of States/Government during the 27th ASEAN Summit to promote economic empowerment of rural women as the driving force of the Small and Medium Enterprises in ASEAN region. We encouraged the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication and the ASEAN Economic Ministers to consider the recommendations submitted by the Forum to further promote economic empowerment of rural women in the region.

81. We also noted with appreciation the convening of the ASEAN Conference on Women In Politics: Promoting Representation Through Connectivity and Innovation held in Kuala Lumpur on 17 October 2015. We acknowledged the need to build a political network for ASEAN women who are involved in politics as well as the need for greater participation of women in decision making positions and in the electoral processes, through connectivity and innovation.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY)

82. We recognised the important role of youth in the realisation of a prosperous ASEAN Community and were pleased with the outcome of the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth (AMMY) that was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 4 June 2015. We encouraged AMMY to ensure that the youth sector will contribute to the ASEAN Community beyond 2015 and undertake continued assessment on the outcome and effectiveness of youth-related initiatives through, among others, the establishment of the ASEAN Youth Development Index (AYDI).

83. We commended Malaysia's efforts to promote meaningful youth involvement towards ASEAN Community building through the successful convening of the ASEAN Young Leaders Summit that was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 18 – 20 November 2015 which has provided a platform for young leaders from ASEAN as well as ASEAN Dialogue Partner countries to meet and discuss pertinent issues, whilst advocating solutions in the true spirit of an ASEAN regional community.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM)

84. We reaffirmed our commitment to build on the collective strength of ASEAN Member States to effectively and efficiently reduce disaster risks and respond to disaster, while promoting disaster resilience among all stakeholders. We reiterated support towards the enhancement of the role of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in coordinating and complementing the work of ASEAN Member States in disaster management. We commended the work of the ASEAN Joint Task Force on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to develop coherence in terms of planning and capacity building among the relevant ASEAN

Bodies. We encouraged efforts towards Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through sustainable development and climate change adaptation. We welcomed the institutionalisation of the annual convening of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and looked forward to further discussions on building ASEAN's capacity to effectively respond to regional disasters at the 3rd AMMDM and Related Meetings which will be held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 14-18 December 2015.

ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI)

85. We agreed that the strengthening of media cooperation and responsible use of social media will contribute towards the greater promotion of ASEAN awareness, increased understanding of the benefits of ASEAN's integration as well as solidarity among the peoples of ASEAN. We encouraged ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) to further strengthen cooperation in the field of information and media by leveraging on all forms of media.

ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA)

86. We recognised that the rich cultural diversity in ASEAN is an important enabler towards building a people-centred ASEAN Community. We tasked the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA) to further strengthen culture and arts cooperation with the view to further promote ASEAN identity. We welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN Cultural Centre in Bangkok, which is the first ASEAN Cultural Centre in Southeast Asia, in line with one of the strategic objectives of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (2009-2015) to promote the conservation and preservation of ASEAN cultural heritage to ensure its continuity to enhance awareness and understanding of the peoples of ASEAN.

ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM)

87. We reiterated our resolve to realise the vision of a "A Healthy, Caring, and Sustainable ASEAN Community" and noted the achievements in the implementation of the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health Development 2010-2015. We noted the importance of strengthening primary health care in order to achieve universal health coverage in the ASEAN Member States and expressed support towards the attainment of the goals within the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda. We reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening cooperation on regional pandemic preparedness and building resilient health systems in response to all hazards and emerging threats to health.

88. We recognised the establishment of the ASEAN Risk Assessment Centre for Food Safety (ARAC) in Malaysia as an important landmark in the application of an integrated risk assessment mechanism to provide independent scientific input by pooling and utilizing scientific expertise across ASEAN in developing

evidence-based common food safety measures in ASEAN. This would contribute towards safe and quality food in the ASEAN Community as well as in facilitating food trade within ASEAN.

ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM)

89. We underscored the importance of competitive and productive labour force for the fulfilment of economic and social objectives of ASEAN. We lauded the achievement in implementing the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Work Programme 2010-2015 and the finalisation of the ALM' Work Programme 2016-2020. We encouraged the promotion of labour-related corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the region. We stressed the need to improve the decent work condition through the promotion of, among others, labour inspection and occupational safety and health, promote employment and skills development, and ensure quality migration management in the region. We supported the efforts by the ASEAN Labour Ministers to continue working on the finalisation of the ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers.

ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED)

90. We adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Higher Education, which acknowledges the critical importance of higher education as one of the catalysts in accelerating ASEAN force for the socio-economic fulfilment. We expressed our commitment to the aspirations and guiding principles in promoting a people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN through cooperation in higher education.

91. We noted with satisfaction the successful implementation of the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011-2015) that has strengthened collaborative efforts among ASEAN Member States. We tasked ASEAN Education Ministers to further enhance cooperation with the view to implementing the next ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2016-2020) as the basis reference to strengthen, deepen, and widen educational cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other regional platforms for education. We were pleased with efforts made to strengthen the ASEAN University Network (AUN) through the revision of the AUN Charter in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of AUN.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS)

92. We noted the progress made under the ASEAN cooperation in sports in fostering social inclusion of ASEAN citizens and mutual understanding among them. We further encouraged the AMMS to have greater interaction and dialogue with other ASEAN Sectoral bodies, regional and international, educational organisations, Dialogue Partners, and other parties with interest in sports to ensure synergy, minimise any overlapping areas of cooperation, and maximise efficiency in the allocation of resources.

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology (AMMST)

93. We welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025. We recognised the urgency in applying science-based innovation towards achieving sustainable economic growth and in addressing difficult challenges such as food and energy security, clean environment, sustaining a disaster resilient and more inclusive ASEAN. In this regard, we expressed our strong commitment to support science, technology and innovation to meet these ends. In this connection, specific plans and programmes, in particular in enhancing talent mobility and fostering entrepreneurship for our young generation, should be implemented not only to meet the goals of APASTI but also to contribute significantly to achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

INITIATIVE FOR ASEAN INTEGRATION

94. We underscored the importance of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) in narrowing the development gap and towards achieving equitable economic development in the region. We welcomed efforts to expedite the implementation of the IAI Work Plan II for the remaining period and noted efforts to draw up an IAI Work Plan III (2016-2025). We looked forward to the development of a post-2015 IAI Agenda which would outline a strategic framework for moving ASEAN integration forward for the next 10 years.

95. Noting that the IAI is cross-cutting in nature, we encouraged the various ASEAN Sectoral bodies to fully participate in the realisation of regional commitments and initiatives. We welcomed closer collaboration between ASEAN, and sub-regional cooperation frameworks including Greater Mekong sub-regional cooperation as well as the support by ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and external partners in the implementation of ASEAN regional initiatives.

ASEAN CONNECTIVITY

96. To ensure a competitive and resilient ASEAN Community, we underscored the importance of strengthening connectivity among ASEAN Member States. The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) plays a key role in achieving the seamless movement of people, goods and services, bringing the peoples of ASEAN closer together in line with ASEAN's aspiration of creating a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN. Mindful that ASEAN Connectivity initiatives are cross-cutting in nature, we underlined the importance of closer collaboration and strengthened coordination in ensuring effective and timely implementation of MPAC initiatives.

97. We welcomed the convening of the 6th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 16 October 2015 with the theme *The Connectivity Agenda for an Integrated ASEAN Community*, which provided a platform for discussions and exchange of views in identifying the best framework in preparing

a post-2015 ASEAN Connectivity Agenda. We acknowledged on-going efforts in formulating a post-2015 Agenda for ASEAN Connectivity and looked forward to its adoption in 2016 and subsequent implementation.

ASEAN Foundation

98. We noted that the ASEAN Foundation in 2015 worked with strategic partners to develop programmes that build the sense of an ASEAN identity. The programmes are the ASEAN Foundation's Model ASEAN Meeting, the ASEAN Puppetry Exchange (APEX), and the Reporting ASEAN: 2015 and Beyond, that involve different stakeholders – students, artists and journalists to help ASEAN people recognise and understand ASEAN through its cultures, stories, languages with the intention of encouraging collaboration and sharing. This was in line with Malaysia's Chairmanship theme of Our People, Our Community, Our Vision.

ASEAN EXTERNAL RELATIONS

99. We noted with great satisfaction the progress of ASEAN's relations with Dialogue Partners thus far, with the adoption of new Plans of Action and implementation in strengthening cooperation and enhancing understanding between both sides.

100. We welcomed the elevation of our partnerships with New Zealand and the United States to the strategic level. We hoped to see our Strategic Partners contribute significantly to realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, reinforcing the ASEAN-centred regional architecture and supporting enhanced regional connectivity, for the peace and prosperity of the region.

101. We welcomed the decision of the 48th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (48th AMM) held on 4 August 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to confer Norway the Sectoral Dialogue Partner status. We expressed confidence that this will pave the way for closer cooperation between ASEAN and Norway in the years to come.

102. We looked forward to the completion of the three independent studies on ASEAN Membership Application by Timor-Leste and its implications on the APSC, AEC and ASCC community building. We reiterated our commitment to provide assistance for Timor-Leste's capacity building process, including through their participation in ASEAN activities, subject to the elements agreed by the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group (ACCWG) on Timor-Leste's ASEAN Membership Application.

103. We recognised the external parties' growing interests to establish a formal partnership with ASEAN. Therefore, we resolved to consider such requests in accordance with the Guidelines for ASEAN's External Relations, including on the basis of mutual interest and benefit to support ASEAN Community building and

taking into account the importance of a holistic perspective based on geostrategic considerations.

104. We reiterated ASEAN's central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture and reaffirmed our commitment to further enhance and strengthen our partnerships through various ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the ASEAN Plus One and Plus Three Mechanisms, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, EAMF and the ADMM Plus.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Terrorism and Extremism

105. We expressed sadness and extended our condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims of the senseless terrorist attacks in Paris recently and in other parts of the world. We believed that every single act of terror is an act of cowardice and should be strongly condemned. These acts of terror served as a stark reminder on the need for us to remain vigilant and resolute in our fight against terrorism. We therefore agreed to coordinate more closely in stamping out terrorism and violent extremism.

South China Sea

106. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security and upholding freedom of navigation in and over-flight over the South China Sea.

107. We shared the concerns expressed by some Leaders on the increased presence of military assets and the possibility of further militarisation of outposts in the South China Sea. We urged all parties to ensure the maintenance of peace, security and stability.

108. We urged all parties to maintain and enhance mutual trust and confidence, to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities, to avoid actions that would escalate tension, and to not resort to threat or use of force.

109. We underscored the commitment of all parties to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We urged that consultations be intensified to ensure the expeditious establishment of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

110. We emphasised the importance for the states concerned to resolve their differences and disputes through peaceful means, in accordance with international law including 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Middle East

111. We expressed grave concern over the violence that is spreading rapidly across the entire West Bank due to the on-going clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces. We urged both sides to demonstrate restraint and take urgent action to stop any further escalation. We stressed that reconciliation and tolerance is the way forward to ensure a sustainable peace dialogue to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We reiterated ASEAN's support for the legitimate right of the Palestinian people for an independent and viable state of Palestine, based on a two-state solution where Palestine and Israel live side-by-side in peace.

112. We reaffirmed that there is no alternative to a negotiated two state solution. The regional context, including the ongoing radicalization and spread of terrorism, makes it even more urgent to end the conflict. The viability of the two state solution is constantly being eroded by new facts on the ground. We urged both parties to demonstrate their stated commitment to the two-state solution through concrete actions. We believed that compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law by states and non-state actors, including accountability, is a cornerstone for peace and security in the region.

70th Anniversary of the United Nations

113. In commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we were encouraged by the achievements of the UN over the past seven decades and reaffirmed our commitment to work with other UN member states in realizing the aspirations contained in the Charter of the United Nations. We welcomed the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) as a new, universal set of goals, targets, and indicators, which we would like to achieve by 2030. We underlined the complementarity of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with ASEAN community building efforts to uplift the standards of living of our people. In this connection, we reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen the existing, multifaceted partnership between ASEAN and the UN for the benefits of the ASEAN people. We expressed our commitment to contribute positively to the work of the United Nations through ASEAN candidatures and welcomed the ASEAN Ministerial Statement on the Occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations of 29 September 2015.
