



Joint Statement of the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit: The Sydney Declaration

Sydney Australia, 18 March 2018

1. We, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Australia, met in Sydney, Australia, on 18 March 2018 for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, the first time we have met together in Australia.
2. We acknowledge that the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit marks a new era in the increasingly close ASEAN-Australia relationship, elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2014. This Summit reaffirms that we are partners with a vital stake in a dynamic region undergoing major changes. We commit to intensify our shared work to shape a secure and prosperous region for our people.
3. We reaffirm our commitment to ASEAN's central role in the evolving rules-based regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive, and promotes stability and prosperity through ASEAN-led mechanisms. We recognise the critical role a strong, united, resilient and innovative ASEAN can play in fostering peace, stability and inclusive growth, and the contributions of ASEAN over the past 50 years towards regional peace and prosperity. We appreciate Australia's contribution to ASEAN Community Building, including through support for the implementation of ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together.
4. We share a strong commitment to regional peace and security as well as peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, the exercise of self-restraint, without resorting to the threat or use of force in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, and the rules-based regional and international order. We recognise the vital role regional and multilateral institutions play in fostering cooperation, peace and prosperity.
5. We reaffirm our mutual respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, non-interference and political independence of all nations as espoused in the Charter of the United Nations, the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). The principles of mutual benefit, shared responsibility to promote peace and security, prosperity and sustainable development are central to further strengthening our strategic partnership.

Our Region's Security

6. We unequivocally condemn in the strongest terms terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We reiterate our commitment to work together even more closely to enhance regional cooperation to counter terrorism, including to prevent and suppress the flow of foreign terrorist fighters in our region, and address the underlying factors and conditions that contribute to the growth and spread of violent extremism and radicalisation. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Government of Australia on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism signed on 17 March 2018 will deepen and expand our strong existing cooperation.
7. We have grave concerns about the escalation of tensions in the Korean Peninsula including the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, which threaten regional and global peace and security. We strongly urge the DPRK to immediately and fully comply with its obligations under all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) and call on all UN Member States to fully implement relevant UNSCRs. We reiterate our support for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner as well as initiatives towards establishing peace in the Korean Peninsula. We welcome efforts to improve inter-Korea relations. We also welcome ASEAN's readiness to play a constructive role in contributing to peace and stability in the Korean peninsula.
8. Given our significant maritime interests, we affirm our shared views of the importance of the peaceful use of seas and oceans, which are vital to our economic well-being.
9. We reaffirm the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. We emphasise the importance of non-militarisation and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may complicate the situation. We reaffirm the need for states to pursue the peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and to comply with the relevant standards and recommended practices by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In this regard, we support the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and look forward to an early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).
10. We will further enhance our efforts to tackle shared and complex maritime issues, including food security and livelihoods, piracy and armed robbery against ships and other crimes at sea, along with improved vessel search safety capability, as well as through implementation of the EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation.
11. We rededicate ourselves to strengthening our long-standing cooperation on law enforcement, customs and immigration in countering transnational crime in the region, including illicit drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, cybercrime and other emerging forms of transnational crime. We reaffirm our commitment to enhance cooperation to combat trafficking in persons and people smuggling and promote safe, orderly and regular migration.
12. To bolster peace and security in our region, we commit to enhancing and expanding the scope and sophistication of our defence cooperation both through bilateral and regional mechanisms, including the ARF and the ADMM Plus.

Our Future Prosperity

13. As highly trade-oriented economies, we reaffirm our support to enhance trade and investment as well as resisting all forms of protectionism to improve regional development and prosperity. We are committed to free and open markets and underline the critical importance of the rules-based multilateral trading system. We will redouble our efforts to deepen ASEAN-Australia economic integration and cooperation, including sharing technical expertise and other capacity building measures; strengthening sub-regional cooperation frameworks as test beds to accelerate the development and implementation of ASEAN agreements; intensifying engagement in regional trade negotiations; effective review of non-tariff measures which create unnecessary obstacles to trade, in accordance with the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area and by fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth, a competitive business environment, job creation, innovation and entrepreneurship in support of the ASEAN Economic Community.
14. With cyber technology becoming a central enabler in the economy, we commit to deepening cooperation on cyber security and digital trade issues. We have a shared commitment to promote an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment consistent with each state's respective domestic laws and regulations. We affirm our commitment to promoting international stability for cyberspace based on existing international law, cooperative capacity building, practical confidence building measures, voluntary, and non-binding norms of responsible behaviour taking reference from the 2015 Report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. We will also promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth and prosperity, through supporting digital trade, entrepreneurship, help developing a digital-ready workforce, and promoting our region's further integration into the global marketplace.
15. We recognise the critical role of quality, sustainable and transparent infrastructure development, facilitating access to finance, and smart and sustainable urban planning in our growing cities in improving economic growth and integration in our region. ASEAN welcomes Australia's continued support for this agenda including through implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025.
16. We will support our private sectors to strengthen their business ties, including through enhancing dialogue between ASEAN-Australia business chambers, peak industry bodies and policy-makers. We will continue to improve outcomes for business through measures to enhance trade and investment flows within the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area and deepen ASEAN economic integration. We will foster innovation, and promote competition, financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. A key focus will be enabling Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to benefit from digital transformation and further integrate into regional value chains.
17. We commit to intensify efforts in 2018 towards a swift conclusion of a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

18. We will promote open, dynamic and competitive economies that benefit all of our people, and promote good governance, including through women's economic empowerment. We will work together to ensure that trade and investment enhance inclusive, sustainable growth. ASEAN welcomes Australia's continued support to narrow the development gap within ASEAN including through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). We also reaffirm our shared commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and welcome the efforts to promote complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
19. We will cooperate to conserve and sustainably use marine resources in accordance with international law, notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and address threats to these resources including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Our People

20. ASEAN and Australia share long-standing, deep and dynamic social and cultural connections. We commit to strengthening even further our people-to-people links, with a special focus on investing in enduring connections between future leaders. We welcome the contribution of the New Colombo Plan in building youth links and commit to deepening our highly successful education and sport exchange programs including the Australia Awards, the Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships and programs under the Australia-ASEAN Council.
21. We are committed to the promotion of common values such as peace, harmony, intercultural understanding, the rule of law, good governance, respect, trust, tolerance, inclusiveness, moderation, social responsibility and diversity.
22. We share a commitment to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in our region in order to realise sustained, inclusive peace and prosperity and economic development, as well as removing barriers to women's full participation in the economy. We also commit to the principles of the women, peace and security agenda and to strengthen collaboration on promoting the role of women in building and sustaining peace. The meaningful inclusion of women in all aspects of peace and security processes helps to prevent conflict, secures durable peace, and supports economic recovery and growth.
23. We renew our resolve to promote and protect the human rights of our peoples, including through the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the Australian Human Rights Commission as well as the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children. We will continue to enhance our dialogue and cooperation on the promotion and protection of human rights as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other applicable international human rights instruments to which we are all parties.
24. We will continue to strengthen our region's resilience by cooperating on disaster risk reduction and management and planning, including supporting the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management. We will also work together to combat infectious and communicable diseases, address other growing health challenges including aging, as well as enhance pandemic preparedness by supporting effective monitoring prevention and response systems.

25. We support actions to address climate change, in particular the effective and full implementation of the Paris Agreement and relevant goals and targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will continue to promote integrated water resources management; sustainable management of forests; use of renewable and alternative energy sources and green technology; sustainable management of coastal and marine environment and biodiversity conservation and management. We will strengthen such cooperation in international and regional forums, including collaboration with the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.
26. We support ASEAN's efforts in the implementation of ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

Further Dialogue and Cooperation

27. We commit to continue political dialogue at the Head of State/Government level, building on our extensive ministerial and senior officials-level dialogue, through future biennial ASEAN-Australia Leaders' Summits; strengthening regional security architecture in support of the rules-based regional order, particularly the East Asia Summit as the region's premier Leaders-led strategic forum; and to enhance collaboration in regional and international forums.
28. We will continue to cooperate on the full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership (2015- 2019).
29. We welcome initiatives arising from this Summit covering the areas of counter-terrorism; counter trafficking in persons; cyber security and digital trade; defence; maritime; economic; urbanisation and infrastructure; connectivity; education; health; and women, peace and security to further strengthen our strategic partnership. We look forward to further consultations in the implementation of these initiatives.

Adopted in Sydney, Australia on the Eighteenth Day of March of the Year Two Thousand and Eighteen.