

Overview of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations

Introduction

ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations commenced when H.E. Qian Qichen, the then Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, attended the opening session of the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur as a guest of the Malaysian Government in which he expressed China's keen interest to cooperate with ASEAN for mutual benefit. Subsequently, China was accorded full Dialogue Partner status at the 29th AMM in July 1996 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

2. The relationship between ASEAN and China was elevated to a higher plane with the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity at the 7th ASEAN-China Summit in October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia. The first and second Plans of Action to implement the Joint Declaration (POA) were concluded in 2010 and 2015 respectively. The third POA with a timeframe of 2016-2020 was adopted ad-referendum in November 2015 by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and China.

3. ASEAN and China agreed on eleven priority areas of cooperation, namely agriculture, information and communication technology, human resource development, Mekong Basin Development, investment, energy, transport, culture, public health, tourism and environment.

4. China appointed its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN and established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta in September 2012.

5. The ASEAN-China Centre in Beijing was launched at the 14th ASEAN-China Summit in November 2011 in Bali. The Centre is a one-stop information centre to promote ASEAN-China cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, education, and culture. The virtual centre can be accessed at <http://www.asean-china-center.org/>. Five Meetings of the Joint Council of the ASEAN-China Centre (ACC) have been held in Beijing since 2011.

6. 2016 marked the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China dialogue relations. ASEAN Member States and China held a series of activities to commemorate this milestone. The celebrations culminated in a Commemorative Summit held back-to-back with the ASEAN Summit in September 2016 in Vientiane.

Political and Security Cooperation

7. ASEAN and China continue to enhance political-security dialogue and cooperation through various ASEAN Plus One mechanisms including summit, ministerial and senior officials' meetings, as well as in broader ASEAN-led frameworks such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus).

8. China was the first Dialogue Partner of ASEAN to accede to the TAC in October 2003. China's accession to the TAC has contributed to the stature of the TAC as the code of conduct for inter-state relations in the region. China was also the first Nuclear Weapon State (NWS) which expressed its intention to accede to the Protocol to the SEANWFZ.

9. With the desire to promote peaceful, friendly and harmonious environment in the South China Sea, ASEAN and China signed the Declaration on the Conducts of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in November 2002 in Phnom Penh. ASEAN and China adopted the Guidelines to implement the DOC on 21 July 2011 in Bali, Indonesia.

10. The PMC Plus One Session with China held on 25 July 2016 in Vientiane endorsed the Joint Statement by Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China on the Full and Effective Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the South China Sea (SCS) which reflected its commitment to ensure the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety.

11. At the 19th ASEAN-China Summit to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations the Leaders expressed commitment to the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety and working substantively towards the early adoption of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) based on consensus. The Leaders adopted the Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea, and the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the DOC. The Leaders welcomed the elements of completing the implementation of Early Harvest Measures by the end of 2016, finishing the consultation on the COC outline in the first half 2017 under circumstances without disturbances and fast tracking COC consultations as contained in China's proposed Four Visions on the Code of Conduct (COC) consultations.

12. ASEAN and China have been cooperating under the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) since it was established in 2010. An ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting was held on 15-16 October 2015 in Beijing. At the Meeting, the Ministers explored avenues of practical cooperation and welcomed the forging of closer ties, to be carried out within the existing ADMM-Plus framework. China participated in the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials Meeting Plus Working Group in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, on 22-24 February 2016.

13. Annual consultations are held between ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and China, while biannual consultations are held between the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) and China to promote their cooperation in combating transnational crimes and other non-traditional security issues. At the 4th AMMTC+China held on 30 September 2015, the Ministers noted the significant progress of ASEAN and China cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues such as combating terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, arms smuggling, sea piracy, money laundering, international economic crime and cybercrime; and law enforcement capacity building under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues signed in 2004 and renewed in 2009.

14. To further strengthen the existing security cooperation between ASEAN and China, a new MOU between ASEAN and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues has been

finalised and agreed by all ASEAN Member States and China. The arrangement for the signing of the MOU is being discussed by the SOMTC.

Economic Cooperation

15. ASEAN-China economic relations continue to maintain their strong momentum. China continued to be ASEAN's largest trading partner with total bilateral trade at USD 346.4 billion in 2015, accounting for 15.2 per cent of ASEAN's total trade. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from China to ASEAN amounted to USD 8.2 billion in 2015, positioning China as ASEAN's fourth largest source of FDI.¹

16. The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed in November 2002 to establish the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA). The ACFTA was realised on 1 January 2010 and took full effect on 1 January 2015. In line with the mandate given by the Leaders to upgrade the ACFTA, the "Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Certain Agreements thereunder between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China" (ACFTA Upgrade Protocol) was signed on 21 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, at the sidelines of the 27th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits. The Protocol, which entered into force on 1 July 2016, is expected to bring ASEAN and China closer to realising their twin goals of two-way trade and investment of US\$1 trillion and US\$150 billion respectively by 2020.

17. The ASEAN-China EXPO (CAEXPO), an event which showcases products from ASEAN and China, has been organised and hosted by China on an annual basis in Nanning, China since 2004. At the margin of the CAEXPO, an ASEAN-China Business and Investment Summit (CABIS) was established to bring government and the private sector together to exchange views on matters affecting the economy and businesses of ASEAN Member States and China. The 11th and 12th CAEXPO were convened in Nanning, China on 16-19 September 2014 and 18-21 September 2015, respectively. The 13th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO), which was held 11-14 September 2016 in the same city under the theme "Building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Forging an Even-closer China-ASEAN Community of Common Destiny".

18. ASEAN-China cooperation in agriculture focuses on enhancing cooperation in human resource development through a series of training courses on agricultural technologies to help train agricultural technicians and officials of ASEAN Member States. Upon the expiry of the MOU between the ASEAN Secretariat and the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China on Agricultural Cooperation (2007-2011), the MOU was renewed on 27 September 2013 for a period of five years.

19. ASEAN and China continued to strengthen their cooperation in Information and Communication Technology. After concluding the implementation of the Action Plan to Implement the Beijing Declaration on ASEAN-China ICT Cooperative Partnership for Common Development (2007-2012), the 7th Meeting of the Ministers responsible for Telecommunications and Information Technology of the ASEAN Member States and China (TELMIN+China) held on 16 November 2012 in Cebu, the Philippines, adopted the succeeding Action Plan for the period of 2012-2016. Subsequently, ASEAN and

¹ Joint Media Statement of the 15th ASEAN-MOFCOM Consultations, 4 August 2016, Vientiane

China in November 2013 signed an MOU on cooperation in ICT, which covers the areas such as promoting industry, human resources and infrastructure development, as well as cooperation in new technologies and information exchange.

20. At the 10th TELMIN+China held on 27 November 2015 in Da Nang, Viet Nam, the Ministers endorsed the 2016 ASEAN-China ICT Work Plan which includes the activities to exchange and cooperate in the areas of broadband development and Universal Service Obligation (USO), Internet-based new business and applications, cloud computing and big data, ICT's role for economic and social development, as well as the Action Plan for Implementing the ASEAN-China Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Cooperative Mechanism. The CERTs Cooperative Mechanism would serve as a platform to strengthen cybersecurity cooperation between CERTs in ASEAN Member States and China.

21. ASEAN and China signed the MOU on Transport Cooperation in November 2004 in Vientiane. The MOU aims to promote cooperation in the areas of medium and long-term cooperation: i) transport infrastructure construction; ii) transport facilitation; iii) maritime safety and security; iv) air transport; v) human resources development; and vi) information exchange. ASEAN and China signed two agreements on transport, namely i) ASEAN-China Maritime Transport Agreement (AC-MTA) signed on 2 November 2007 and ii) ASEAN-China Air Transport Agreement (AC-ATA) signed on 12 November 2010.

22. At the 14th ASEAN and China Transport Ministers Meeting (ATM+China) held on 5 November 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to enhance transport connectivity between and among ASEAN Member States and China and urged their senior officials to continue their effort to move forward the priority areas and major projects/activities in railway, highway, civil aviation and waterway transport cooperation in order to facilitate regional trade and investment flows. The Ministers adopted the ASEAN-China Maritime Training and Education Development Strategy and acknowledged the importance of this initiative to improve the quality of human resources for the development of regional and global shipping industry.

23. On tourism, China has become a major source of tourists for ASEAN. According to ASEAN Statistics, ASEAN received around 13,06 million tourists from China in 2014 compared with 12.65 million in 2013. Meanwhile, the number of ASEAN tourist arrivals to China was more than 5.99 million in 2013 and increased to 6.16 million in 2014. ASEAN and China agreed to designate 2017 as the ASEAN-China Year of Tourism Cooperation; of which the opening ceremony was held on 16 March 2017 in Manila.

24. On cooperation in quality inspection, two MOUs on Strengthening Sanitary and Phytosanitary Cooperation (SPS) and Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment (TBT) between ASEAN and China were signed on 20 November 2007 and 24 October 2009, respectively. In order to implement the MOUs, ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine on SPS and TBT was established and held alternately every year. The latest Meeting on quality inspection was the 4th ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine on SPS cooperation, which was held on 25 September 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw. At the Meeting, the Ministers reiterated the commitment to strengthen SPS cooperation

between ASEAN and China and endorsed the new Plan of Action 2015 – 2016, covering cooperation in: (i) establishment of information notification and communication system; (ii) exchange of visits of relevant personnel of the Parties; (iii) organise training, seminar, conference and similar activities for narrowing the development gap within ASEAN and China; (iv) collaborative research in the areas of mutual interest; and (v) establishment of mechanism for consultation. The 5th ASEAN China Ministerial Meeting on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Cooperation was held on 10 September 2016 in Nanning, China.

25. The year 2012 was designated as the ASEAN-China Year of Cooperation in Science and Technology. A series of activities were implemented to mark the year, including among others the ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation and launching of the ASEAN-China Science and Technology Partnership (STEP) Programme. Notable progress has been made in implementing STEP including building ASEAN-China joint laboratories, ASEAN-China Remote Sensing Satellite Data Sharing and Service Platform, ASEAN-China technology Transfer Centre, and Talented Young Scientists Visiting China. The China-ASEAN Technology Transfer Center has contributed to facilitating information sharing, resource matchmaking and other related services to encourage collaboration between Chinese and ASEAN enterprises and science parks.

26. On connectivity, the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the Chinese Working Committee on Connectivity convened their first meeting on 7 November 2012 at the ASEAN Secretariat. At the 15th ASEAN-China Summit on 19 November 2012, the Leaders reaffirmed that ASEAN Connectivity is considered as priority and fundamental in the development of an enhanced connectivity between ASEAN and the wider region, including ASEAN with China and tasked the ACCC and the Chinese Working Committee on Connectivity to identify key areas for connectivity cooperation and work out a list of prioritised projects, and coordinate technical and financial resource mobilisation from both ASEAN and China to better support financing for connectivity cooperation projects. The 2nd Meeting between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the Chinese Working Committee on China-ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (CWC-CACCC) was held on 28 August 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan. The upcoming 3rd ACCC-China is scheduled for the second half of 2017.

27. At 19th ASEAN-China Summit in September 2016, the Leaders expressed commitment to continue to strengthen cooperation in the area of connectivity that will bring mutual benefits, including through capacity building and resource mobilisation for the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025), exploring ways to improve connectivity between both sides by synergising common priorities identified in the MPAC 2025 and China's "Belt and Road" initiative, and encourage the active involvement of relevant multilateral financial institutions.

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

28. On socio-cultural cooperation, a number of activities have been carried out in the areas of public health, education, culture, labour and social security, local government and people-to-people exchanges, environment, media, youth, social development, and poverty reduction.

29. On public health, the Ministers on Health of ASEAN and China signed an MOU on Health Cooperation at the Fourth ASEAN-China Health Ministers Meeting on 6 July 2012 in Phuket, Thailand. At the Fifth ASEAN-China Health Ministers Meeting on 19 September 2015 in Ha Noi, the Ministers welcomed the ASEAN-China cooperation in communicable diseases prevention and control, especially the collaboration on malaria, dengue fever, HIV and AIDS, and plague prevention and control in border areas. The Ministers committed to strengthen the ASEAN-China cooperation in capacity building for public health personnel in the region and in traditional medicine and its contribution to universal health care, where applicable. The Ministers welcome the sharing of experiences on using traditional medicine in strengthening primary health care.

30. ASEAN-China cooperation on education made good progress. 2016 is designated as the ASEAN-China Year of Educational Exchange. One of the main activities was the 9th China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week (CAECW) which was held in Guiyang on 1 – 4 August 2016. The 9th CAECW focused on three cross-cutting themes such as skills and talents cultivation of 21st Century, youth employment and enterprise education, and education reform and innovation. The highlight of the CAECW was the 2nd China-ASEAN Education Ministers Round Table Conference on 3 August 2016 which adopted a Joint Communiqué on the Development of ASEAN-China Education Cooperation in support of the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020. The week-long event also featured several important education and youth events including the First China-ASEAN Youth Education Forum and Public Speaking Contest 2016, the 2016 China-ASEAN Youth Camp, and the China-Southeast Asia TVET Mobility and Networking Programme.

31. On youth cooperation, programmes and activities to strengthen youth exchanges and cooperation between ASEAN and China continues to be held regularly. These include China-ASEAN Youth Camp, GMS Youth Friendship Programme and the ASEAN Young Leaders Training Program. The activities aim to promote the mutual trust and understanding between the Chinese and ASEAN young people and contribute to the regional economic development and social cooperation.

32. On cultural cooperation, a Plan of Action on China-ASEAN Cultural Cooperation (2014-2016) was adopted at the 2nd AMCA+China Meeting on 20 April 2014 in Hue, Viet Nam. The year 2014 was designated as the ASEAN-China Cultural Exchange Year with various activities undertaken in ASEAN Member States and China. The 11th ASEAN-China Cultural Forum was held on 9-12 September 2016 in Nanning, China. The forum's theme was "Exchange and Sharing: Cooperation and Development of Cultural and Art Education of China and ASEAN". Keynote speeches delivered during the Forum highlighted opportunities for art and culture educational institutions to network, shared practices and improved the quality of art and culture education. The roundtable meeting of the heads of art schools and AMS and China highlighted the need for educators and students to develop their skills and perspectives in tapping the culture of ASEAN and China to contribute to the growth of arts in these two regions.

33. On environmental cooperation, the ASEAN-China Environmental Protection Cooperation Strategy 2009-2015 was adopted by the Environment Ministers of ASEAN Member States and China at the 8th ASEAN Plus Three Environment Ministers Meeting in October 2009 to serve as a guiding document for enhancing ASEAN-China cooperation in common priority areas of environmental protection up to

2015. The China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre (CAEC) was established in Beijing on 17 March 2010 and officially inaugurated on 24 May 2011 to implement the ASEAN-China Environmental Protection Cooperation Strategy 2009-2015. Upon conclusion of the Cooperation Strategy, ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN) and China endorsed the ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Cooperation (2016-2020) in 2016.

34. On disaster management, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on Disaster Management Cooperation was signed on 6 October 2014. The MOU for RMB 50 million to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme, the operationalisation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), and the ASEAN Secretariat's capacity building programmes on disaster management. To operationalise the MoU, a series of consultations were conducted to develop an implementation plan including the Project Technical Consultation of Disaster Management Cooperation between China and ASEAN.

35. ASEAN and China have continued to organise exchange visits for media personnel. On 16-18 September 2015, Thailand hosted the Visit of Broadcasting Personnel to Thailand with the funding under the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund. The visit had helped the participant to broaden their perspective of ASEAN and China broadcasting personnel and enhance their media capability by learning new knowledge and practices, and by sharing their skills and experiences among ASEAN and China media practitioners through the visit.
