



ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)



one vision
one identity
one community

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The Bangkok Declaration of 8 August 1967 that established ASEAN declared among others the following aims and purposes that to this day remain relevant for ASEAN political and security cooperation, namely:

- To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asia; and
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Preserving regional peace and stability, adopting a comprehensive approach to security challenges and developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with external parties have been the underlying principles of ASEAN's approach to political and security issues and developments.

Serving as the bedrock for peace and stability in Southeast Asia are ASEAN political instruments such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) which is a key code of conduct governing inter-state relations in the region; the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) which preserves our region free of nuclear weapons; and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the on-going discussions on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) which promotes peaceful settlement of disputes and practical maritime cooperation in the South China Sea.

Seven years of implementation of the APSC Blueprint (2009-2015) has cemented the foundation of the APSC by deepening and expanding ASEAN political and security cooperation and strengthening ASEAN capacity in responding to regional and international challenges. Building upon these achievements, the *APSC Blueprint 2025* aims to elevate ASEAN political-security cooperation to an even higher plane as an integral part of the *ASEAN Community Vision 2025*.

It is envisaged that the ASEAN Political-Security Community by 2025 shall be a united, inclusive and resilient community where the ASEAN peoples shall live in a safe, harmonious and secure environment, embrace the values of tolerance and moderation as well as uphold ASEAN fundamental principles, shared values and norms. It is further envisaged that ASEAN shall remain cohesive, responsive and relevant in addressing challenges to regional peace and security as well as play a central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture, while deepening our engagement with external parties and contributing collectively to global peace, security and stability.

The APSC has the following key characteristics:

- (i) A rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred community bound by fundamental principles, shared values and norms, in which our peoples enjoy human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice, embrace the values of tolerance and moderation, and share a strong sense of togetherness, common identity and destiny;
- (ii) A resilient community in a peaceful, secure and stable region, with enhanced capacity to

respond effectively and in a timely manner to challenges for the common good of ASEAN, in accordance with the principle of comprehensive security;

- (iii) An outward-looking community that deepens cooperation with our external parties, upholds and strengthens ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture, and plays a responsible and constructive role globally based on an ASEAN common platform on international issues; and
- (iv) A community with strengthened institutional capacity through improved ASEAN work processes and coordination, increased effectiveness and efficiency in the work of all ASEAN Organs, including a strengthened ASEAN Secretariat, as well as with increased ASEAN institutional presence at the national, regional and international levels.

To build a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred community, the APSC has consistently promoted cooperation in political development that adheres to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance as well as respect for, promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the area of human rights, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was established in 2009, which spurred the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. This was further enhanced with the promulgation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), adopted in November 2012

with the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD signed by our Leaders. These two documents embody the commitment of the Governments of the ASEAN Member States to safeguard the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of ASEAN. The AICHR has institutionalised its engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) to encourage meaningful and constructive interaction. Recognising the cross-cutting nature of human rights, the AICHR as the overarching human rights institution in ASEAN continuously undertake cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and collaboration to ensure that human rights are mainstreamed in all pillars of ASEAN, including, among others, on rights of persons with disabilities, business and human rights, and trafficking in persons.

In building a peaceful, secure and stable region, ASEAN adopts a comprehensive approach to security which enhances our capacity to deal with existing and emerging challenges. It pursues peaceful settlement of disputes and renounces aggression and the threat or use of force or other actions in any manner inconsistent with international law. Relevant bodies in the APSC continues to work in addressing non-traditional security challenges including drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, people smuggling, cybercrime, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, disaster relief and pandemics, among others.

ASEAN cooperation on combating trafficking in persons was enhanced when the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons,



Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) was signed by the ASEAN Leaders at the 27th ASEAN Summit in 2015. This regional legal framework along with its corresponding Plan of Action will address the issue of trafficking in persons in a more effective and efficient manner.

ASEAN has also expressed concern over the growing threat of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism and the danger it poses to the ASEAN region. ASEAN has in place the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT) which entered into force in May 2011. In addition, there is a renewed commitment to work together with the international community on this issue and the Global Movement of Moderates has been recognized as an ASEAN contribution to global efforts in tackling these threats.

In realising the vision of a Drug-Free region, ASEAN adopts a comprehensive approach, which involves demand and supply reduction measures as well as strengthening the areas of enforcement, preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation, research and alternative development. The implementation of these measures is guided by the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remains an important mechanism to promote security cooperation in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The ARF continues to strengthen confidence building measures and advance towards the stage of preventive diplomacy through dialogue and

cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament and cyber security.

Practical cooperation and strategic dialogue in the defence sector remain significant, specifically in the areas of maritime security, peacekeeping operations, military medicine, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), counter-terrorism, and humanitarian mine action. The launch of the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) in Bangkok in April 2016 will better facilitate ASEAN's capacity and ability to respond to HADR situations in the region in a timely and effective manner.

To preserve and enhance peace, stability and prosperity in the region, the APSC seeks to strengthen mutually beneficial relations between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners and other external parties. It also maintains the centrality and proactive role of ASEAN in regional mechanisms that is open, transparent and inclusive, while remaining actively engaged and forward-looking.

In realising its goals, APSC would strengthen its institutional capacity and presence. This will be pursued through streamlining ASEAN work processes, increasing effectiveness, efficiency and coordination in the work of ASEAN Organs and Bodies, strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat, and increasing ASEAN institutional presence at the national, regional and international levels.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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