

The APSC seeks to further strengthen partnership and cooperation between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, Development Partner and other external parties including regional and international organisations. This contributes to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. ASEAN also maintains its centrality and proactive role in shaping the evolving regional architecture which is open, transparent and inclusive, rules-based, and built upon ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting-Plus and East Asia Summit. ASEAN will also remain actively engaged and forward-looking including exploring engagement with potential partners to support ASEAN Community building, as well as enhance ASEAN's capacity to contribute and respond to international issues of common interest and concern.

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



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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association 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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ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY (APSC)



one vision
 one identity
 one community

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY

The Bangkok Declaration of 8 August 1967 that established ASEAN declared among others the following which remain relevant for ASEAN political and security cooperation:

- To accelerate 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.



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)* for governing inter-state relations in the region; the *Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty* which promotes the region as free from nuclear weapons; and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

The seven years of implementation of the *ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint* from 2009-2015 laid the foundation of the APSC by deepening and expanding ASEAN political and security cooperation and strengthening ASEAN capacity to respond to regional and international challenges. Building upon these achievements, the *APSC Blueprint 2025* aims to elevate ASEAN political-security cooperation to a higher plane as an integral component 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 ASEAN peoples 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 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, where ASEAN 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 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, 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 establishment of the *ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)* in 2009 spurred the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. This was further enhanced with the adoption of the *ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD)* in 2012 through the *Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD* signed by the Leaders. These two documents embody the commitment of the Governments of the ASEAN Member States to safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples 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 undertakes cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and collaboration to mainstream human rights 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 to enhance the capacity to deal with current and emerging challenges. It pursues peaceful settlement of disputes and renounces aggression and the threat or use of force or other actions inconsistent with international law. Relevant bodies in the APSC continue to work in addressing non-traditional security challenges to include drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, people smuggling, cybercrime, illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, disaster relief and pandemics, among others.



ASEAN has taken significant measures to address the growing threat of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism in the region. Guided by the *ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT)*, ASEAN has renewed its *Comprehensive Plan of Action* on this issue and strengthened its commitment through the adoption of the *Manila Declaration to Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism*. These measures not only enhance ASEAN's cooperation and commitment but also ensure that ASEAN's efforts remain relevant to new and emerging dimensions of this threat.

With the entry into force of the *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP)* in March 2017 and the adoption of its corresponding *Plan of Action*, the fight against trafficking in persons remains high in the ASEAN agenda. ASEAN's attempt to streamline regional activities to combat trafficking in persons is embodied in the *Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan 2017-2020*. The Work Plan would ensure effective safeguards and protection to victims of trafficking, further strengthen enforcement measures as well as promote closer cooperation and collaboration among relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in countering trafficking in persons.

In realising the vision of a Drug-Free region, ASEAN adopts a comprehensive approach, which involves measures to reduce demand and supply as well as strengthening 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 2016-2025*. ASEAN also adopted in 2017 the *ASEAN Cooperation Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle*. Since 2016, the *ASEAN Drug Monitoring Report* has been published on an annual basis to promote public awareness of the drug situation in ASEAN Member States.

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) remains an important mechanism for promoting security cooperation in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The ARF continues to pursue confidence building measures as it moves towards preventive diplomacy through dialogue and cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism and transnational crime, disaster relief, maritime security, non-proliferation and disarmament and information and communication technology.

Practical cooperation and strategic dialogue in the defence sector continue to progress. The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) launched in 2017 a hotline, known as the ASEAN Direct Communications Infrastructure (ADI), that allows Ministers to resolve crisis situation pertinent to maritime security. In addition, the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) was established in 2016 to facilitate ASEAN's capacity and ability to respond to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADRR) situations in the region in a timely and effective manner. Similarly, the ADMM-Plus has effectively promoted cooperation in the areas of maritime security, military medicine, counter terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action and cyber security.