



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Press Release

**ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference Session with the European Union and
the 28th ASEAN Regional Forum**

6 August 2021, via Videoconference



On 6 August 2021, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, attended the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference Session with the European Union and the 28th ASEAN Regional Forum.

ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference with the European Union (EU)

The Meeting welcomed the elevation of ASEAN-EU relations to a Strategic Partnership following the agreement at the 23rd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) on 1 December 2020, and expressed satisfaction on the achievements and progress made in implementing the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action (2018-2022).

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed their appreciation for the EU's commitment to ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms based on shared beliefs in a rules-based multilateral order, especially when addressing regional and international issues of common concern. In this connection, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers commended the EU's active role in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic through its contribution to enhance global vaccine access through the COVAX Facility and "Team Europe" package of over EUR 800 million to assist ASEAN in addressing the spread of this disease. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of deepening ASEAN-EU cooperation on post-pandemic recovery efforts through the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF).

In discussing the future direction of ASEAN-EU dialogue relations, the Meeting reaffirmed the importance of ASEAN-EU economic and socio-cultural cooperation in areas spanning trade and investment, digital economy, connectivity, tourism, smart cities, environmental protection and climate change, biodiversity conservation, disaster



management, sustainable development, narrowing the development gap, migration, youth and education. Suggestions were made that both regions need to address the fair treatment of two-way trade as they seek to enrich the elevated strategic partnership based on mutual interest and mutual respect.

To mark the 45th anniversary of ASEAN-EU relations, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers supported the EU's proposal for a Commemorative Summit in 2022 in Brussels.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn highlighted that substantial relations between ASEAN and the EU have been built upon a shared commitment to multilateralism, equality and mutual respect, and win-win cooperation. He highlighted that initiatives with bearing on ASEAN, including the EU's Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, should support ASEAN Centrality and be complementary with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). Furthermore, he stressed on the importance of concerting further efforts to strengthen ASEAN-EU economic cooperation and the multilateral rules-based trading system, including through the potential realisation of an ASEAN-EU FTA.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister further emphasized that Cambodia, as the ASEAN Chair for 2022, stands ready to join hands with the Philippines, as the incoming Country Coordinator for ASEAN-EU Relations, other ASEAN Member States, and the EU to ensure the success of the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit in Brussels in 2022.

28th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

The Meeting commended the progress of the ARF process and highlighted its significant contributions to confidence building, peace, security and stability in the Asia-Pacific. To carry forward this positive momentum, the Ministers shared their commitment to advance the ARF process through the effective implementation of all action lines under the ARF Hanoi Plan of Action II 2020-2025 (HPOA II).

The Ministers discussed regional and international issues of common interest and concern on topics encompassing the geopolitical architecture and matters pertaining to norms and the rules-based order, transnational crime, increased cybersecurity threat, terrorism, maritime security and cooperation, climate change, permanent peace and denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula, the South China Sea issue and efforts to resolve Myanmar crisis.

The Meeting welcomed the appointment of H.E. Erywan Yusof, Second Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, on 4 August 2021, as an important step towards the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus adopted at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on 24 April 2021.



The Meeting welcomed the publication of the 2021 ARF Annual Security Outlook (ASO) and underlined its importance to the promotion of transparency and confidence among ARF Participants.

The Ministers emphasized the importance of enhancing regional and international solidarity and cooperation towards a collective and effective response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Meeting adopted the Joint Statement on Promoting the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, which aims to increase inclusive representation of youth in the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as in peacebuilding and sustaining peace .

The Meeting also discussed the future direction of the ARF and agreed to maintain the ARF process as a platform to promote peace, security and stability in the Asia-Pacific through dialogue, consultations, and the implementation of activities that foster confidence-building and trust among the participants. The Ministers also emphasized the significance of the ARF in facilitating ASEAN-centric collaboration on regional political and security issues of shared interest and concern. In this connection, the ARF Ministers also shared their views on the value of entering the preventive diplomacy stage of the ARF process, especially in consideration of emerging complexities and uncertainties affecting the region.

As the Meeting fell on the day when atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, call was made that the world should not repeat history in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and urged for further actions on non-proliferation.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister emphasized on the ARF's importance as a multilateral forum for consultative dialogue, confidence-building, and trust promotion for the entire Asia-Pacific, and that this should be leveraged upon to consolidate international solidarity against the COVID-19 pandemic without finger-pointing and politicization.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister also took this opportunity to affirm Cambodia's support for the resumption of Inter-Korean communication channels as a constructive move towards rekindling mutual trust and confidence between the two Koreas. On the South China Sea, Cambodia welcomed the resumption of the COC textual negotiation as a reflection of the strong will and commitment of the ASEAN Member States and China to maintain regional stability by peacefully manage differences in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

Phnom Penh, 7 August 2021

