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PRESS RELEASE

Outcomes of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat

On 29 January 2026, at the invitation of **Her Excellency Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro**, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and Chair of ASEAN, **His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, attended the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' (AMM) Retreat in Cebu, the Philippines.

The Meeting was briefed by the ASEAN Chair on its priorities and key deliverables in 2026, guided by its theme **"Navigating Our Future, Together"**. The ASEAN Member States expressed their readiness to work together in achieving the three main strategic priorities, namely peace and security anchors, prosperity corridors, and people empowerment. The Meeting also stressed the importance of building a resilient, innovative, dynamic and people-centred ASEAN in accordance with the ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future, and underscored the need to translate this vision into concrete actions that would bring about tangible benefits for the peoples.

The Meeting discussed the need to strengthen ASEAN's external relations in a coherent, principled and strategic manner that contributes effectively to ASEAN Community-building efforts. The Meeting emphasised the importance of ensuring that such engagement remains aligned with ASEAN priorities, responsive to current and emerging challenges, and supportive of regionalism, multilateralism and ASEAN Centrality. The Meeting also underscored that the engagement with all external partners should be mutually beneficial, deliver tangible benefits to the region, and contribute to regional peace, stability and sustainable development. The Meeting further noted the Assessment Paper on ASEAN's Formal Partnerships prepared by the ASEAN Secretariat, which includes a recommendation to decide by 2026 on the future of the moratorium on new Dialogue Partnerships.

During the Meeting, **His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister** noted that the Philippines' theme and priorities are both timely and relevant, at a time when the foundations of regional peace and prosperity are being tested by complex and interlinked



challenges. ASEAN, therefore, must navigate geopolitical and internal tensions, rapid technological change, climate risks, and major socio-economic transitions. In this context, he highlighted three priorities. **First**, strengthening trade and investment within ASEAN and with external partners remains essential to shared prosperity, including through the modernisation of existing free trade agreements. **Second**, ASEAN must deepen regional connectivity and advance the development of the ASEAN Power Grid. **Third**, ASEAN must empower micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through capacity-building, improved access to finance and the adoption of new technologies in order to enhance productivity and competitiveness, ensuring that the peoples of ASEAN benefit from deeper integration and new growth sectors. With regard to new Partnership, **His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister** reaffirmed Cambodia's continued support for Türkiye's application to become an ASEAN Dialogue Partner at the earliest opportunity.

On the follow-up of the Special AMM held on 22 December 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, **His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister** briefed the Meeting on latest developments along the Cambodia–Thailand border, including follow-up actions to implement the Joint Statement of the 3rd Special General Border Committee (GBC) Meeting of 27 December 2025 which established the second Ceasefire. He began by expressing Cambodia's deep appreciation to Malaysia, as ASEAN Chair in 2025, for facilitating the ceasefire and supporting efforts towards a peaceful resolution. He also thanked ASEAN Member States for their steadfast support for the ceasefire, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and for contributing personnel to the ASEAN Observer Team (AOT).

He informed ASEAN colleagues that the GBC Meeting also produced arrangements and agreements on de-escalation measures and concrete steps toward the peaceful resolution of the situation in accordance with international laws and existing treaties and agreement between the two countries. He added that both sides agreed that all arrangements under the Joint Statement of the 3rd Special GBC Meeting are without prejudice to the border demarcation and the international boundary between the two countries. Both countries further emphasised the critical importance of consolidating the second ceasefire of 27 December 2025 and ensuring lasting peace, security and stability along the border through open and direct communication, mutual trust, confidence-building measures, and coordinated efforts.

The **Deputy Prime Minister** emphasized that despite positive progress since the ceasefire, there are still some activities that are not in line with the Joint Statement of the 3rd Special GBC Meeting, particularly with regard to respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. Such actions risk escalating tensions and undermining efforts to return to normalcy and restore peace. At the time of the Meeting, 9,635 Cambodian people from 2,448 families remained unable to return to their homes in safety and dignity, an



arrangement both sides have committed to in the Joint Statement, as their homes are either inaccessible due to physical obstruction and security threats or have been dismantled or destroyed. As a result, they continue to live in makeshift displacement sites, and thousands of children remain unable to attend school. The Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn underlined that Cambodia has remained firmly and faithfully committed to upholding and implementing the Ceasefire and the Joint Statement in their entirety, in the sincere hope that it would not only bring an end to hostilities and restore calm and normalcy along the border, but also pave the way for just and lasting solutions, so that our two peoples may live side by side in peace, stability, and shared prosperity. He called upon his ASEAN colleagues to continue supporting the peaceful settlement of this dispute in accordance with international law, existing treaties and agreements, and the fundamental principle of the non-use of force against the territorial integrity of any state—so that peace and stability may prevail not only between Cambodia and Thailand, but throughout our entire region.

He concluded that “amid repeated and serious challenges to global governance and international law, the threat or use of force in relations between States is on the rise, with a growing risk that the notion that “might makes right” could become normalised. As a region that values hard-earned peace as one of its most precious assets, ASEAN must not go down this path. This is about our community, our family and our future”.

On the sidelines of the Retreat, **His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister** held bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States during which he discussed the ways and means to strengthening of bilateral relations.

With **His Excellency Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, both Ministers recalled the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Singapore last year, and expressed their satisfaction at seeing the close and cordial relations between Cambodia and Singapore continue to flourish.

With **His Excellency Sugiono**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, the two Ministers expressed their satisfaction over the growing ties of friendship and cooperation, especially the cordial and close relation between their leaders and reaffirmed their strong commitment to further deepening relations and cooperation in multiple areas. **His Excellency Sugiono** appreciated the Royal Government of Cambodia for the support and facilitation extended to Indonesian citizens in Cambodia. Both Ministers look forward to the 6th Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation later this year.

During the meeting with **Her Excellency Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro**, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, the two Ministers discussed a wide range of areas of



cooperation and underscored the importance of increasing the frequency and depth of engagements to further consolidate the cordial relations between the two countries. **His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister** reiterated Cambodia's full support for the Philippines' Chairship of ASEAN in 2026. **Her Excellency Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro**, in her capacity as the ASEAN Chair, expressed her readiness to continue facilitating the full and effective implementation of the Joint Statement of the 3rd Special GBC Meeting between Cambodia and Thailand of 27 December 2025, including assuming the role of Chair of the AOT from Malaysia. The two Ministers also discussed preparations for the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of the Philippines next year, including the convening of the 5th Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation.

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister met **His Excellency Thongsavanh Phomvihane**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao DPR. Both Ministers highly valued the importance of the growing bilateral ties between Cambodia and Laos that are bound together by years of solidarity and close cooperation. They also discussed the preparation of the forthcoming State visit of President Thongloun Sisoulith.

During the above bilateral meetings, the Ministers also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest and concern. Taking the opportunity, **His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister** updated his counterparts on the latest developments regarding the situation along the border with Thailand.



Phnom Penh, 30 January 2026