



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**
Department of Information

Press Release

On the Outcomes of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat (AMM Retreat)

17-18 January 2019, Chiang Mai, Thailand

His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, led a Cambodian delegation to attend the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat (AMM Retreat) which convened on 17-18 January 2019 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, to discuss on important issues related to the follow-up on the 33rd ASEAN Summit and Related Summits especially on ASEAN Community Building process, ASEAN's relations with external parties, and exchange of views on regional and international issues.

During the Retreat, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, as Chair of ASEAN, informed the Meeting of the priorities of Thailand's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2019 under the theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability".

On ASEAN Community Building, the Ministers had fruitful discussion on the implementation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025 especially the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint, the ASEAN Integration, Narrowing of Development Gap and ASEAN Connectivity.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers emphasized the need of continuing to strengthen the ASEAN centrality and ASEAN's leading role in the evolving regional architecture and in its relations with external parties. The Ministers recognized the increasing rivalry between major powers in the region and its possible impact on ASEAN centrality. His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister expressed his welcome for initiatives that contribute to strengthening of ASEAN centrality and unity, and adhere to the principles of openness, inclusiveness, and mutual complementarity. He pointed out that ASEAN



should find a way to generate more efforts for community building while continuing to closely engage with all ASEAN external partners to serve the best interest of peace and shared prosperity for the region and beyond.

On matter relating to promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister viewed that the resilience of ASEAN Community building depends to a large extent of all efforts of ASEAN Member States to align respective national development policies with those of the regional and global development agenda so that benefits could be generated from the inherent complementarities. He further underlined Cambodia's support for Thailand's innovative initiative to establish this year the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue. To add, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister expressed hope that the Centre would be able to reach out to other national and regional think tank to explore new and bolder ideas to synergize their respective national and regional activities in support of the implementation of SDGs and ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

The Ministers recognized the importance in developing an ASEAN collective approach on the Indo-Pacific outlook based on key principles such as inclusiveness, transparency, and complementarity. The Ministers tasked Senior Officials to further discuss this concept.

The Meeting also discussed the strengthening of ASEAN-EU relations and looked forward to the convening of the 22nd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting on 21 January 2019 in Brussels, Belgium, where the Ministers will discuss the review and future directions of the ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations as well as regional issues of common concerns for both region and beyond. The Ministers agreed in principle to upgrade ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Partnership to a Strategic Partnership, subject to further details and timing to be worked out. His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister expressed concerns on the use of double standard approach to pick and choose only areas that suit and benefit stronger countries. He also firmly emphasized that Cambodia would not trade its sovereignty for any assistance. In the past, Cambodia has gone through a hard time. He also expressed his regret over recent European Commission's decision to impose safeguard measures on rice from Cambodia and Myanmar on 16



January 2019. The Meeting took note of the concerns regarding the case of the palm oil against Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Ministers exchanged their views on regional and international issues including counter-terrorism and extremist violence, Rakhine State, Korean Peninsular and South China Sea.

On the Rakhine State, the Ministers noted the updated briefing by Myanmar Foreign Minister and the Secretary-General of ASEAN. The Ministers expressed their continued strong commitment in supporting Myanmar to find a comprehensive and durable solution in order to bring peace, stability, to promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities, as well as to ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine States. The Ministers also exchanged views on how ASEAN can help Myanmar and the role of AHA Centre and other UN agencies in this regard.

On the South China Sea issue, the Ministers took note of the continued improving cooperation between ASEAN and China and were encouraged by the progress of the substantive negotiations toward the early conclusion of an effective COC.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers reiterated their support to ASEAN Chair in 2019 and look forward to working closely with Thailand and external partners of ASEAN to achieve the aforementioned priorities. ♡

Phnom Penh, 20 January 2019

