



## **REPORT OF THE ASEAN-RUSSIA EMINENT PERSONS GROUP**

### **ASEAN AND RUSSIA: A FUTURE-ORIENTED MULTIDIMENSIONAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

#### **Introduction**

1. The ASEAN-Russian Ministerial Meeting on 5 August 2015 agreed to establish the ASEAN-Russia Eminent Persons Group (AREPG) to review ASEAN-Russia relations since the establishment of a full dialogue partnership in 1996 and to explore ways to further strengthen and deepen this relationship. The AREPG's mandate is to propose action-oriented recommendations on the future direction of ASEAN-Russia relations, which will be presented to the Leaders for consideration at the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit in Sochi, Russia on 19-20 May 2016.
2. The AREPG conducted its deliberations over three Meetings as follows: (i) 19-20 January 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR; (ii) 29 February – 1 March 2016 in Siem Reap, Cambodia; and (iii) 6-7 April 2016 in Moscow, Russia.
3. The AREPG noted with satisfaction that ASEAN-Russia relations have expanded significantly since ties were established in 1991. The cooperation over the years covering the Political-Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural Pillars has contributed to a closer ASEAN-Russia partnership. ASEAN and Russia share a common vision on many global issues and a mutual interest in the promotion of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. An Overview of ASEAN-Russia Partnership and Cooperation is attached.
4. Taking stock of the present cooperation level of ASEAN-Russia relations, ASEAN's evolution into a Community and the global and regional geo-political landscapes, the AREPG concluded that the partnership should be further strengthened through closer interaction and collaboration on mutually beneficial activities and projects in all areas of cooperation. The AREPG agreed that the enhanced cooperation will continue to be based on the United Nations (UN) Charter and universally recognised principles of international law as well as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC); the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on Principles for Mutual Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles); and be consistent with ASEAN processes and norms such as ASEAN Centrality in the emerging regional architecture.

To this end, the AREPG proposed the following:

#### **Recommendations**

5. The AREPG envisions a mutually supportive ASEAN-Russia relationship

focusing on areas of cooperation that are consistent with and supportive of ASEAN Community building efforts including the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and its Blueprints. ASEAN Centrality in the evolving regional architecture will continue to remain as one of the key guiding principles in the development of the ASEAN-Russia partnership. ASEAN welcomes Russia's constructive and independent role in the Asia-Pacific region in order to establish an open, balanced, stable and inclusive regional architecture.

6. These recommendations build on the already strong and long-standing ASEAN-Russia relationship including the Comprehensive Programme of Action to Promote Cooperation between ASEAN and the Russian Federation (2005-2015) and the Comprehensive Plan of Action to Promote Cooperation between ASEAN and the Russian Federation (2016-2020).
7. To further consolidate ties and deepen cooperation, ASEAN and Russia should consider working towards a strategic partnership which will serve as a catalyst for closer and multi-dimensional cooperation between both sides; promote cooperation between ASEAN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), building on the Memorandum of Understanding between the ASEAN Secretariat and the SCO Secretariat in Jakarta on 21 April 2005; as well as promote cooperation between ASEAN and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and other regional cooperation frameworks.

## **A. Political-Security Cooperation**

### **Political Cooperation**

8. Consider more frequent Summit meetings between the Leaders of ASEAN and Russia to highlight the importance of the strong ASEAN-Russia relationship and promote greater connections and interaction in strategic areas.
9. Hold ASEAN-Russia Foreign Ministers' meetings at the sidelines of the UN General Assembly when possible. Enhance coordination among the permanent representatives of ASEAN Member States and Russia at the UN.
10. Establish a separate Russian diplomatic mission with an Ambassador accredited to ASEAN in Jakarta as soon as possible.
11. Promote closer ASEAN – Russia cooperation to strengthen and consolidate the East Asia Summit (EAS) as a Leaders-led forum for strategic dialogue on a comprehensive, open, equal and inclusive security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region based on universally recognised rules and principles of international law, mutual trust and respect for each other's interests, principles of settlement of disputes by peaceful means and refraining from threat or use of force in relations in order to encourage the development of positive relationships and cooperation in the region.
12. Strengthen cooperation within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum

(ARF) to promote confidence building measures, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.

13. Support ASEAN's efforts to promote respect for the fundamental principles and purposes of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty.

### **Security Cooperation**

14. Strengthen cooperation in addressing traditional and non-traditional security issues including in areas such as counter-terrorism and transnational crime, illicit drugs trafficking and cybercrime through existing mechanisms, capacity-building and training programmes as well as exploring the possibility of enhancing intelligence exchange and information sharing amongst law enforcement agencies.
15. Explore the possibility of establishing an ASEAN-Russia coordination mechanism at the Ministerial level on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime.
16. Address transnational crime through close coordination and sharing of expertise and technical knowledge including through the promotion of regular exchanges of law-enforcement officers to combat activities of terrorist organisations by conducting regular joint anti-terrorist training and holding table-top exercises among security agencies.
17. Promote moderation in particular through the Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) as an approach to counter extremism in all aspects including radicalisation and the spread of terrorism.
18. Promote dialogue and cooperation to combat illegal activities at sea such as terrorism, piracy and armed robbery against ships and IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing through enhanced cooperation in ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ARF, EAS, ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).
19. Promote maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce, self-restraint, the non-use of force and/or the threat to use force, and the resolution of disputes by peaceful means, globally and regionally in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

### **Defence Cooperation**

20. Consider the possibility of holding regular consultations between the ADMM and Russia, in line with the Guidelines to Respond to the Request for Informal Engagements or Meetings by the ADMM-Plus Countries.

21. Strengthen cooperation within the framework of the ADMM-Plus to align the ADMM's six priority areas, namely humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, military medicine, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian mine action with emerging regional and international issues of common concern.
22. Enhance the effectiveness of the operation of the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine (ACMM) and actively involve Russia in its work.
23. Support mine clearance activities under the regional and UN frameworks for humanitarian aspects in addressing landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), including technical support for the operationalisation of the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC).

## **B. Economic Cooperation**

### **Trade and Investment**

24. Aspire to increase two-way trade to USD100 billion by 2025.
25. Effectively implement the ASEAN-Russia Trade and Investment Cooperation Roadmap and, when mutually agreed, regularly review and update its Work Programme.
26. Study means of enhancing ASEAN – Russia economic cooperation including the possibilities of establishing an ASEAN – Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Area (FTA) and Russia joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
27. Explore the possibility of an equal and mutually beneficial trilateral economic partnership among ASEAN, the EAEU and the SCO which could initially focus on *inter alia* the protection of investments, facilitating trade by streamlining customs procedures and reciprocal opening of services and capital markets.
28. Encourage cooperation on trade and investment between ASEAN and Russia, through *inter alia* the promotion of direct trade and the organisation of trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars, workshops and publications.
29. Promote investments through *inter alia* investment incentives, dispute resolution mechanisms, protection of intellectual property rights and banking cooperation.
30. Enhance cooperation to narrow development gaps within ASEAN and within the Russian Federation through strengthening capacity building and human resource development.
31. Facilitate business-to-business relations through the Russia-ASEAN Business Council (RABC) and the ASEAN-Russia Economic Roadshow as

well as organize other meetings between ASEAN and Russian business people, promote regular business missions and encourage the establishment of an ASEAN counterpart to the RABC.

32. Strengthen cooperation in the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the establishment of an ASEAN-Russia SMEs Promotion and Cooperation Forum and encourage joint ventures between SMEs in ASEAN and Russia.

### **Natural Resources, Agriculture and Energy Cooperation**

33. Explore more substantive energy cooperation between ASEAN Member States and Russia within the framework of the ASEAN-Russia Energy Cooperation Work Programme 2016-2020.
34. Enhance cooperation in food and energy security through the sharing of technology on food production, research and development of clean and renewable energy and exploring the establishment of a joint ASEAN-Russia panel to develop appropriate strategies.
35. Increase cooperation in the areas of food and food products, agriculture, forestry and fisheries through capacity building, sharing of experience and best practices as well as research and training programmes.
36. Explore Russia's participation in the activities of sub-regional cooperation frameworks such as the Mekong sub-regional initiatives in promoting the effective and sustainable use of water resources; and the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) in the development of food, energy and other mineral resources.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

37. Explore enhanced cooperation in infrastructure development in Russia as well as in ASEAN Member States.
38. Explore the possibility of further cooperation in rail transport, civil aircraft industry and shipbuilding by developing *inter alia* joint ventures between ASEAN Member States and Russia for the production of new types of aircraft, including the short and medium range passenger airliner MC-21 and marine vessels.
39. Enhance the dialogue between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the relevant Russian agencies to strengthen connectivity within ASEAN and Russia, in line with the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and the Strategy of Social and Economic Development of the Russian Far East regions respectively, as well as explore trans-regional connectivity between ASEAN and EAEU as an important part of ASEAN-Russia future strategic connectivity.

### **Development Gap**

40. Enhance cooperation to narrow development gaps in the region through strengthening capacity building, human resource development and gender mainstreaming in key areas such as education, health, trade and investment, ICT, MSMEs and rural development.

#### **Science and Technology**

41. Foster cooperation in peaceful use of space technology, including earth remote sensing and to explore the joint use of the Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS) system, taking into consideration the development of the Vostochny space-launch complex.
42. Promote capacity building, information sharing, technology transfer as well as research and development in science, technology and innovation, particularly among youth to ensure economic competitiveness in an increasingly open regional market.
43. Increase cooperation in the areas of biotechnology and ecology through joint research and development.

#### **Tourism**

44. Strengthen ASEAN-Russia cooperation and capacity in the tourism sector including through the promotion of tourism products in ASEAN and Russian markets and the further promotion of Russian language courses for tourism stakeholders in ASEAN.
45. Develop common principles on tourist safety and improve the quality of tourism services.
46. Promote tourism knowledge and professionalism through conducting joint tour programmes and joint tourism marketing, as well as enhancing the cooperation and coordination of tourism policies and programmes between ASEAN and Russia.
47. Explore the possibility of visa facilitation measures between ASEAN Member States and the Russian Federation in order to maintain, strengthen, and develop the friendship and cooperation between the people of ASEAN and Russia.

### **C. Social-Cultural Cooperation**

#### **Cultural Cooperation**

48. Encourage further engagements and meetings between the Ministers of Culture of ASEAN and Russia as well as other officials responsible for cultural affairs in order to deepen cultural cooperation.
49. Promote exchanges in the fields of music, dance, theatre, art, cinema, museum and library, archaeological and historical heritage and history among others, through various festivals such as the Moscow International Film

Festival and similar festivals in ASEAN Member States as well as regular exchanges of art and museum exhibitions.

50. Encourage and facilitate exchanges of journalists including the provision of working facilities, and the exchange of news, news material and programmes between ASEAN and Russia.

### **Youth and Education**

51. Enhance interaction among youth through educational exchanges such as internships, scholarship programmes and fellowship grants. Continue support for ASEAN – Russia Youth Summits and explore the possibility of establishing an ASEAN-Russia Young Entrepreneurs Forum.
52. Enhance cooperation in education and research by promoting partnerships and regular dialogues between universities and ASEAN think tanks, including the ASEAN University Network (AUN), ASEAN-Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) network and appropriate Russian institutions.
53. Support capacity building in ASEAN through Russian scholarship programmes and increasing quotas for students from ASEAN Member States to study in Russian Institutions of Higher Learning with possible redistribution of unutilised quotas amongst them.
54. Promote collaboration in the area of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with a view to enhance productivity and to meet the overall skills needs of ASEAN Member States and Russia in order to build a strong economic base for the ASEAN region and Russia.
55. Deepen mutual understanding between ASEAN and Russia by encouraging the learning of languages of ASEAN Member States in Russia and the Russian language in ASEAN Member States and exploring the possibility of producing an ASEAN-Russia Encyclopaedia to be published in English and Russian through joint efforts by ASEAN and Russian researchers.

### **Academic and People-to-People Exchanges**

56. Raise the profile and the capacity of the ASEAN Centre in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University) and consider the possibility of establishing a counterpart institution on a voluntary basis in one of the ASEAN Member States.
57. Explore the possibility of establishing an ASEAN-Russia track two mechanism to provide support to the process of building strategic partnership.
58. Consider the establishment of an ASEAN-Russia Network of Think Tanks to promote the further development of the ASEAN-Russia partnership as well as mutual trust and understanding between ASEAN Member States and Russia.
59. Encourage the establishment of friendship societies between ASEAN Member States and Russia to enhance people-to-people interaction, promote

awareness and deepen appreciation for the ASEAN-Russia relationship.

### **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**

60. Strengthen cooperation between ASEAN and Russia on HADR through among others, the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), the work of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), the sharing of experiences and best practices and capability development programmes.
61. Develop and reinforce cooperation between the AHA Centre and other ASEAN mechanisms and the Russian National Crisis Management Centre to develop joint mechanisms and to enhance HADR capability.

### **Environment**

62. Promote research and cooperation in the sustainable use of natural resources, managing and protecting the environment and biodiversity, addressing anthropogenic threats to marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as climate change response, mitigation and adaptation, through the framework of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the implementation of ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Post-2015 Environmental Cooperation and the Russian Federation's Environmental Security Strategy up to 2025.
63. Promote cooperation in waste management by means of sharing best practices and transfer of new technologies to ASEAN to promote environment-friendly practices within the region.

### **Health Cooperation**

64. Expand cooperation to address the threat of infectious and newly emerging diseases, as well as pandemic preparedness in ASEAN and Russia through surveillance cooperation, joint research activities, scientific exchanges and sharing of expertise and information between ASEAN and Russia.
65. Establish strong medical and health care cooperation including human resource capacity building in the field of medicine.

### **Sports and Training**

66. Develop annual programmes to promote sports exhibitions and exchanges in ASEAN and Russia, in areas such as martial arts, petanque, *sepak-takraw*, badminton, tennis, gymnastics, and chess as well as enhance cooperation in sports medicine and training.

## **Conclusion**



67. With much room for ASEAN and Russia to enhance relations, the AREPG's recommendations are first steps to harness the potential of this partnership. As ASEAN-Russia relations mature into a strategic partnership based on common guiding principles, this will result in strengthened relations, enhanced mutually-beneficial collaboration and greater mutual trust.