

37th ASEAN-Australia Forum – Co-Chairs' Summary

1. The 37th ASEAN-Australia Forum (AAF) was held in ASEAN Headquarters, Jakarta, Indonesia, on 19-20 February 2025 to discuss ASEAN and Australia's shared commitment to implementing the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) and working constructively together to address shared regional and global challenges.
2. The Forum was co-chaired by H.E. Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, SOM Leader ASEAN-Indonesia; and H.E. Michelle Chan, Australian ASEAN SOM Leader and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Meeting was attended by Senior Officials from ASEAN Member States, Timor-Leste, Australia, and the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC). The Forum is the first ASEAN-Australia Senior Officials' Meeting during Indonesia's country coordinatorship period of 2024-2027.
3. The Forum is the first Senior Officials' Meeting after the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations held in Melbourne on 4-6 March 2024 which adopted the ASEAN-Australia Leaders' Vision Statement – Partners for Peace and Prosperity and The Melbourne Declaration – A Partnership for the Future. The Forum welcomed progress on implementation of over AUD 500 million in new and expanded initiatives announced at the Special Summit. The Forum welcomed the establishment of the ASEAN-Australia Centre (AAC) which will support the implementation of the ASEAN-Australia CSP by deepening business, education, cultural and community connections between ASEAN, Australia and Timor-Leste.
4. The Forum expressed support for Malaysia's ASEAN Chair year 2025 and its theme of 'Inclusivity and Sustainability' focusing on a resilient, people-centred, and forward-looking ASEAN Community. The Forum looked forward to the finalisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plans, with a view to adopting them at the 46th ASEAN Summit this year in Malaysia.
5. The Forum appreciated Australia's AUD 11.8 million support for Timor-Leste's ASEAN accession and World Trade Organisation post-accession implementation and welcomed Timor-Leste's enhanced participation in ASEAN meetings, including the ASEAN-Australia Forum.

Review of ASEAN-Australia Relations

6. The Forum reaffirmed ASEAN and Australia's commitment to continue promoting a rules-based regional architecture that upholds international law, with ASEAN at the centre. The Forum recognised Australia's continued cooperation and delivery of practical initiatives to support the implementation of the ASEAN-Australia CSP, including through the Aus4ASEAN Futures Initiative and a range of other development cooperation programs.
7. The Forum appreciated Australia's support for the implementation and mainstreaming of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and welcomed the 2nd AOIP Seminar Series: Submarine Cables, which focused on connectivity, protection, and governance of submarine cables, held on 13 February 2025 in Jakarta and co-sponsored by Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The Forum also welcomed support for the implementation of the MoU between ASEAN-Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and between ASEAN-Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), notably through the ASEAN-Australia Indo-Pacific Workshop on the Use of Technology for Sustainable Aquaculture in May 2024 in Bali, Indonesia.

8. The Forum welcomed Australia's role in implementing the Track 1.5 ASEAN Workshop on Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and the ASEAN-led Regional Architecture on 6 December 2024 in Jakarta, co-chaired by Malaysia and Australia. The Forum looked forward to implementation of a Track 1 ASEAN Workshop on Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and the ASEAN-led Regional Architecture later in 2025, and continued cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms to promote conflict prevention so as to reduce the risks of misunderstanding and miscalculation, as well as prevent disputes from escalating into conflict.
9. The Forum discussed the importance of ASEAN-Australia cooperation and the role of ASEAN-led mechanisms – including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+), and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) – in reducing the risk of conflict in the region. The Forum reaffirmed its shared commitment to continue strengthening the EAS as the region's premier Leaders-led Forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern. The Forum underscored Australia and ASEAN's commitment to commemorating the 20th anniversary of the EAS, including by supporting Malaysia as Chair to agree a 20th anniversary statement.
10. The Forum also discussed the rise in transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, terrorism, and cybercrimes such as online scams and online gambling, which pose significant challenges to regional stability. The Forum highlighted the potential to enhance cooperation with Australia to combat transnational crimes, particularly through the Australia Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC + Australia).
11. The Forum highlighted continued practical cooperation between ASEAN and Australia in political-security pillar, including SOMTC + Australia, ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of Ministries of Foreign Affairs Meeting Plus Australia (DGICM + Australia), ASEAN Plus Australia Senior Officials' Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD + Australia) Consultation, the ASEAN-Australia Counter Terrorism Dialogue, and looked forward to the inaugural ASEAN-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue this year.
12. The Forum highlighted Australian support and cooperation on human trafficking and labour migration, notably through the ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program (ASEAN-ACT) and Tripartite Action to Enhance the Contribution of Labour Migration to Growth and Development in ASEAN (TRIANGLE) programs.
13. The Forum recognised the significant economic relations between ASEAN and Australia and welcomed the further implementation of *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*, including the AUD 2 billion Southeast Asia Investment Financing Facility. In FY 2023-2024, Australia's two-way trade with ASEAN nations was AUD 192.9 billion and 2023 two-way investment was AUD 282 billion.
14. The Forum took note of Australia's ratification of the upgraded ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) and looked forward to the Entry into Force of the agreement and ongoing implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The Forum appreciated continuous support on the implementation of the agreements through the Regional Trade for Development (RT4D), AANZFTA Implementation Support Programme (AISP) 2025-2026 and the RCEP Implementation Support Programme (RISP).
15. The Forum welcomed Australia's ongoing support in enhancing regional economic growth and resilience including the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality, ASEAN-CGIAR Innovate for Food Regional

Program, and ASEAN Centre for Energy. The Forum welcomed Australia's support for regional cooperation in the green economy, including support for the ASEAN Power Grid, through an AUD 6.9 million Energy Cooperation Package announced at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit.

16. The Forum appreciated Australia's ongoing support for the Mekong sub-region and looked forward to the continued implementation of the AUD 222.5 million second phase of the Mekong-Australia Partnership Program.
17. The Forum welcomed Australia's support for One Health Initiatives and the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED). Participants also looked forward to Australia's continued assistance in enhancing regional health system resilience.
18. The Forum welcomed the 132 new Aus4ASEAN scholarships, which support emerging ASEAN leaders in studying fields that advance the AOIP's four priority areas of cooperation. It acknowledged – 55 new Aus4ASEAN Fellowships and 50 additional short course scholarships in 2025. The Forum also appreciated the AAC short courses in the thematic areas of Women in STEM and resources and energy transition.
19. The Forum looked forward to continued support for the operationalization of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change in Brunei Darussalam. The Forum also reaffirmed its commitment to working together on the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Programme 2021-2025 and welcomed Australia's continued support for humanitarian efforts in Myanmar through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre).

Regional and international issues

20. The Forum welcomed Australia's reaffirmation of its support for ASEAN Centrality and commitment to regional peace, stability, and security in accordance with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and in the spirit of ASEAN's Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). In this context, Australia reiterated its steadfast commitment to its obligations as a non-nuclear weapon state under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
21. Australia shared its positive perspectives on the Quad's practical agenda to make an enduring contribution to the region. The Forum noted Quad countries are Comprehensive Strategic Partners of ASEAN and steadfast supporters of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.
22. The Forum noted views on regional and international issues including the situation in the South China Sea, underscoring the need for the peaceful resolution of disputes, the full implementation of the Declaration of Conduct (DOC) and the progress in negotiations toward a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea that is in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS. The Forum also discussed the situation in Myanmar; developments in the Korean Peninsula; the situation in Ukraine; and the situation in the Middle East.