ASEM13 - PHNOM PENH - CAMBODIA

13th ASEM Summit
"Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth"
Chair's Statement

Introduction

1. The 13th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM13) was held on 25-26 November 2021 via videoconference. It was attended by the Heads of State/Government, high-level representatives and participants of ASEM countries from Asia and Europe, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of ASEAN. The Summit was hosted by the Kingdom of Cambodia and chaired by **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

2. Under the theme **"*Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth,*"** Leaders reaffirmed the importance of this partnership between Asia and Europe in strengthening dialogue and fostering action-oriented cooperation, based on consensus, equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit to further advance a robust, inclusive and open multilateralism capable of addressing global and regional issues, particularly **the COVID-19 pandemic**. This Chair's Statement should be read in conjunction with the Phnom Penh Statement on the Post-COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery and The Way Forward on ASEM Connectivity which, taken together, form the agreed outcome of the 13th ASEM Summit.

3. While celebrating the 25th Anniversary of ASEM, Leaders took stock with satisfaction of the progress made and achievements gained since its inception in 1996, and were committed to further enhancing the cooperation, partnership and connectivity between Asia and Europe. In this regard, Leaders welcomed the fruitful outcome of the High-level Policy Dialogue "ASEM at 25: Strengthening Asia-Europe Partnership in a Transforming World" held on 22 June 2021 in Ha Noi, which emphasized the need for a bold vision of a stronger Asia-Europe Partnership.

4. Leaders noted with appreciation the outcomes of the **ASEM Ministerial Meetings** held since the 12th ASEM Summit in the areas of Transport (10-11 December 2019, Budapest), Foreign Affairs (15-16 December 2019, Madrid), Education (15-16 May 2019, Bucharest), and Finance (6 November 2020, Dhaka).

5. Leaders stressed the urgent need to uphold the international order based on rules and principles of international law with the United Nations at its core in order to address global and regional challenges. They resolved to work together for peace and security, inclusive and sustainable development, resilience and prosperity, and

the promotion and protection of human rights, on the basis of the UN Charter to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Leaders exchanged views on the **current political and socio-economic situations** in their respective regions and the world at large, and discussed ways to strengthen ASEM cooperation in line with its principles of informality, flexibility, consensus, equal partnership, and mutual benefit.

7. Leaders recognized that sustainable connectivity is a vital basis of regional economic integration and an essential framework for the interconnected development of the world. They reaffirmed their commitment to boost further work on connectivity in line with the ASEM Definition on Connectivity and the ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity (APGC) final report as well as to build on the successful regional initiatives. In this regard, Leaders adopted the document **"The Way Forward on ASEM Connectivity"** which will facilitate the exchange of information and improve forward planning of ASEM-wide Connectivity activities.

8. Leaders welcomed the successful outcome of the 38th and 39th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits held on 26-28 October 2021 via videoconference. They expressed their strong support for ASEAN-led mechanisms and its central role in evolving regional architecture, including through the realization of ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Leaders noted the initiatives proposed by ASEAN that reinforce the ASEAN-centered regional architecture. They appreciated ASEAN´s role in promoting dialogue, confidence-building, and cooperation for peace, security, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

9. Leaders welcomed the role of the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies as well as the G20 in fostering coordinated and collaborative international efforts to address global challenges, including COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery, by achieving and promoting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery with a view to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the related Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Pillar 1: Advancing Multilateralism to Address Global and Regional Challenges

10. Leaders underscored the vital role of the **UN** and its specialized agencies, other international institutions and regional organizations in maintaining international peace, security, fostering inclusive and sustainable development, upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms, and supported the ongoing reform processes including efforts to reform the UN Security Council, revitalize the General Assembly, and strengthen the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to better address the existing and emerging global challenges.

11. Leaders noted the importance of **confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy** in contributing to peace and stability, and reaffirmed the principles of

mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual interest and the renunciation of the use of force and the threat of using force in international relations.

12. Leaders expressed concerns over risks of the proliferation of **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)** and their means of delivery, which constitute a threat to international peace and security. In this respect, they underlined their commitment to upholding the global disarmament and non-proliferation regimes for all **Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMDs)** and ensure the full implementation of all relevant international instruments and UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR). The respective States Parties underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation to ensure the successful outcome of the 10th Review Conference of the State Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

13. Leaders reasserted that all **human rights** are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. They underpinned their commitment to work together for peace and security, sustainable development and inclusive growth, based upon the respect for international law, including the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They also emphasized their commitment to ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions and the rule of law, and to oppose discrimination in all its forms and manifestations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

14. Leaders noted the constructive contribution of all stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, non-government organizations, business sectors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia in protecting and promoting civic space, human rights, gender equality, social justice, and in providing an enabling environment conducive to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

15. Leaders reiterated that gender equality and the empowerment and meaningful participation of women in political, economic, and social life are crucial to sustainable and inclusive growth, including in all three pillars of ASEM. In this regard, they are committed to eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence, and achieving women's equal access to quality education, decent work, and healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services. They are also committed to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the promotion of global peace and security, in line with UNSCR 1325 and other related Resolutions, including UNSCR 2538 on women in peacekeeping. In this connection, Leaders appreciated the convening of the first Asia-Europe Forum on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) organized by Cambodia on 13-14 October 2021, as part of the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions on WPS.

16. Leaders expressed serious concern and agreed to further enhance cooperation to tackle humanitarian crises and emergencies linked to irregular **migration** flows, forced **displacement** and the migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons. They also emphasized the importance of protecting and supporting refugees and displaced persons.

17. Leaders emphasized that preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to **terrorism** is essential. In this regard, they reaffirmed their will to further build on ASEM cooperation while recognizing the primary role of States and their competent authorities to prevent and address radicalization leading to violence, terrorism financing, abuse of the Internet by terrorist groups, terrorist recruitment, foreign terrorist fighters and **transnational crime,** while remaining in full compliance with their commitments and obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

18. Leaders underlined that the development of inter-Korean relations, the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a peace regime are important for peace, security and stability, not only in East Asia but also for the entire world. They reaffirmed their support for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation in the Korean Peninsula. They welcomed the latest diplomatic efforts to resume dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Leaders called on all parties to fully implement UNSC Resolutions. They underlined the requirement of the **UNSC Resolution 2397 for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement** of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, and noted that it affirms an intent to keep DPRK's actions under continuous review and to strengthen, modify, suspend, or lift restrictive measures in the light of DPRK's compliance. They also noted the views expressed by some ASEM Partners on the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns of the international community and the human rights situation, including the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

19. Leaders reiterated their collective support for ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at ensuring the full and effective implementation of the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** (JCPOA) and UNSCR 2231, and welcomed the resumption of the Vienna negotiations. They encouraged ongoing initiatives to foster regional dialogues among all relevant parties in the wider region.

20. Leaders expressed deep concerns on the situation in Myanmar and affirmed their strong support for ASEAN's efforts to de-escalate the crisis. Acknowledging ASEAN's positive and constructive role, they welcomed the outcomes of the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held in Jakarta on 24 April 2021, particularly in calling for the timely and complete implementation of the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus to ensure the crisis is not perpetuated. They called on all parties concerned in Myanmar to engage in peaceful dialogue, immediately cease violence in Myanmar and exercise utmost restraint; and called Myanmar for the early release of all those arbitrarily detained, including foreigners, and return to the path of democratic transition, national reconciliation and sustainable development. They also urged Myanmar to facilitate the visit of the ASEAN Special Envoy to meet all parties concerned. Leaders urged Myanmar to ensure rapid, safe and necessary access for the provision of humanitarian assistance without discrimination to all displaced

persons and people in need across the country and to provide safety and security of humanitarian and medical personnel, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

21. Leaders stressed the importance of finding a comprehensive and durable solution to address the root causes of the conflict in Rakhine State and commended Bangladesh for sheltering displaced persons. They called for the early implementation of the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State between Myanmar and Bangladesh. They underlined the need to establish conducive conditions for the safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return and reintegration of displaced persons to Rakhine State. They underlined the importance of accountability and took note of the national and international efforts in this regard. Leaders expressed their continued support to bring peace, stability, rule of law, and reconciliation among various communities, as well as to ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.

22. Leaders re-affirmed their commitment to maintaining peace, stability and ensuring maritime security and safety, to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded economic activities, and to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, in full compliance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in the interest of all. They expressed concern and discouraged actions that destabilize and increase tensions. They called for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law; to refrain from unilateral actions that are against international law and the threat or use of force in violation of the UN Charter; to respect diplomatic processes as well as the rights of coastal states in their maritime zones, and promote confidence-building measures.

23. Leaders discussed the situation in **Afghanistan.** They noted the critical role of the international community in supporting regional stability and crucially, in addressing the severe humanitarian crisis, calling for unhindered access of humanitarian operators to all regions in the country. They stressed the importance of an inclusive and fully representative government, based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, especially the rights of women, children, persons belonging to ethnic, religious, and other minority groups. Leaders also stressed the need for continued safe passage, secure and orderly departure of all foreign nationals, and Afghans who wish to leave the country in line with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Leaders expressed concern about the security situation and agreed that Afghanistan must never again become a safe haven for terrorism and called on the Taliban to cut ties with all terrorist groups and fulfil their commitments to combat terrorism in a decisive manner.

24. With regard to the downing of Flight MH17, Leaders reaffirmed their full support for the UNSC Resolution 2166.

25. Leaders also underlined the importance to promote and strengthen cooperation on peace and security issues of common interest and concern.

PILLAR 2: Strengthening Multilateralism for Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Recovery and Growth

26. Leaders recognized that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Leaders stressed their full commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Addis Ababa Action Agenda to eradicate poverty, end hunger, reduce inequality and build an inclusive and sustainable future and to ensure that no one is left behind.

27. In light of the challenges posed by COVID-19, Leaders welcomed the adoption of **ASEM Host and Regional Coordinators' Ministerial Statement on COVID-19** on 7 September 2020 and the **Phnom Penh Statement on the Post-COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery**, both of which reflected ASEM Partners' commitment to effectively control the spread of the pandemic, ensuring availability, affordability, and equitable access, safe, quality and effective vaccines, and address its socio-economic fallouts and to promote the full implementation of the Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage.

28. They also underscored the importance of holding regular meetings to discuss their trade and investment relations, including in the context of the Economic Ministers' Meeting (EMM) as/when appropriate.

29. Leaders expressed deep concerns at the number and scale of disasters as well as their devastating impacts, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, they committed to strengthening efforts to reduce the risk of disasters and foster resilient-development in line with UNGA Resolution A/RES/75/216 and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. They also encouraged ASEM Partners to participate in the regional and global frameworks in order to enhance exchange of knowledge, best practices and capacity-building on different aspects of disaster resilience, including early warning. In this regard, they welcomed the upcoming Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2022 in Indonesia.

30. Leaders expressed their willingness to tackle the growing global challenges associated with climate change, extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and pollution. They reaffirmed their strong commitment to the **Paris Agreement,** the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN FCCC)** and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in order to accelerate the transitions towards sustainable energy, conserving biodiversity, reducing pollution, protecting terrestrial and marine ecosystems as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, and promoting resource efficiency, and circular economy. They welcomed the outcomes of the first

part of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Kunming and the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP26) in Glasgow. They reaffirmed the Paris Agreement temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. They stressed the importance of providing finance and technology to facilitate the transition and were committed to enhancing international cooperation for this purpose. In line with COP26 outcomes, ASEM Partners expressed their resolve to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets in their nationally determined contributions as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal by the end of 2022, taking into account different national circumstances.

31. Leaders encouraged all ASEM Partners to place sustainable and resilient measures at the center of their recovery plans, including but not limited to, accelerating the transition towards affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and ecosystem protection and restoration.

32. Leaders expressed their concerns on the increasing incidences of ocean pollution globally, including marine plastic litter and micro-plastics, the over-exploitation of fisheries and degradation of marine habitats, and called for an improved **ocean governance** within the UN framework **and healthy ecosystem,** and joint efforts to promote **sustainable blue economy**. They also prioritized international cooperation on reducing pollution from land-based sources, waste prevention and management, and working together towards an efficient and sustainable shipping as well as expressing their willingness to engage in discussions on the occasion of UN Environment Assembly.

33. Leaders appreciated the key policies underpinning **water, energy, food security and ecosystem nexus**. They remained convinced that the bi-regional cooperation between the Danube and Mekong regions presents a model that can transform shared challenges of transboundary impacts of water resource management into opportunities for international cooperation towards sustainable, inclusive growth and development. In this regard, Leaders encouraged to further leverage the ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue.

34. Leaders highlighted the vital need to maintain an open global economy and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening and upholding the open, fair, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory **rules-based multilateral trading system** with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core for long-term growth and prosperity by avoiding unilateral protectionist measures and practices that run counter to the spirit, principles and rules of the WTO, in order to ensure an open, fair, free, inclusive and non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment. To that end, they were committed to making progress towards the WTO reform at the 12th Ministerial Conference in Geneva.

35. They also expected ASEM relevant authorities to further facilitate the movement of essential goods necessary to combat the pandemic, including COVID-19 vaccines and medical supplies as well as stop international flows of fake vaccines at border among ASEM Partners within the rules of the World Customs Organization.

36. Leaders recognized that the **key towards minimizing the economic disruptions** is to bring the spread of COVID-19 under control, and prevent future public health emergencies. They underscored the need to explore innovative approaches in financing for international development cooperation to ensure continued support, particularly for developing countries, and enhance long-term fiscal and financial stability in the two regions, whose fiscal policy space had been affected by the pandemic. They were committed to ensuring a smooth and unimpeded operation of the logistics networks and supply chains. Leaders recognized the cross-border nature of transport industries and stressed the importance of regular exchange of information, best practices and measures taken by ASEM countries. They welcomed the outcomes of the UN ESCAP Forum on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe in Bangkok on 5-6 October 2021.

37. Leaders underlined the importance of promoting **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs)** between Asia and Europe so that concrete initiatives and projects, particularly to support the development of creative economy and promoting and strengthening Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) capacity in MSMEs and PPPs, better access to digital infrastructure and further participation of MSMEs in value chains, and industrial cluster development can be further implemented through various multilateral platforms for shared growth, including Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

38. Leaders recognized the key role of **digital economy** in promoting inclusive economic growth, fostering digital transformation, bridging digital divide, building open, fair, secure and trusted digital environment, enhancing digital human resource development skills, supporting seamless global trade and business conduct, and fostering their collective efforts towards a post-pandemic recovery. Leaders acknowledged the need to strengthen the competitiveness of our economies in the global market by increasing investment in the creation and application of digital technology, especially among MSMEs. They also urged all ASEM Partners to work together to promote structural reforms to effectively embrace the digital economy and harness technological transformation.

39. Leaders recognized that COVID-19 demonstrated a growing dependence of states and individuals on information and communication technologies (ICTs). They reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen **ASEM cooperation on digital connectivity** in order to ensure a global, open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment.

40. Leaders stressed the importance of connectivity and the need to strengthen economic resilience through quality infrastructure investment in accordance with agreed international standards by ASEM Partners, taking into consideration sustainability, openness, transparency, economic efficiency and debt sustainability. In this regard, they recognized and encouraged the participation of various stakeholders, such as multilateral institutions and the private sector, as a crucial driver of infrastructure investments.

41. Leaders were committed to promoting decent work for all and responsible business conduct in global supply chains in line with the fundamental principles and rights at work of the **International Labour Organization** and the **UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights** as well as 2030 Agenda. They underlined the importance of effective social dialogues between governments, employers and workers' organizations to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Pillar 3: Enhancing Multilateralism for Social and Cultural Links

42. Leaders highlighted the shared interest of ASEM Partners in **enhancing Asia-Europe connectivity,** which has not only political and economic aspects, but also socio-cultural links and people-to-people aspects. Leaders emphasized that an open, transparent, and inclusive connectivity provides an opportunity for all, especially in improving the e-learning quality in ASEM countries, while mitigating the COVID-19 impacts and promoting socio-economic recovery. To this end, they welcomed the first Asia-Europe Sustainable Connectivity Scientific Conference (AESCON) held in Singapore on 23-25 September 2020.

43. Leaders recognized that **young people** are effective agents of change propelling humanity's movement towards a new sustainable future. To this end, they were committed to ensuring young people's meaningful participation in all spheres and levels of public and political life. They also encouraged the expansion of educational exchange and cooperation among ASEM Partners through an ASEM strategy for sharing good practices of ways to tackle common global issues. In this connection, Leaders took note of the ASEM Youth Declaration as a result of the 4th ASEF Young Leaders' Summit (ASEFYLS4) organized by Cambodia on 22-26 November 2021 under *the theme "Sustainable Development in a Post-COVID-19 World."*

44. Leaders acknowledged that **volunteerism** can be a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that deserves to be further promoted throughout ASEM agenda in accordance with UNGA Resolution 73/140 "Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

45. Leaders considered sustainable tourism and creative economy as a catalyst for people-to-people connectivity, economic cooperation, and quality-job creation.

They stressed the need to strengthen cooperation on sustainable tourism and creative economy, which has been hit hard by the pandemic.

46. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to freedom of religion or belief, advancing interfaith and intercultural dialogues, and the respect for cultural diversity as important components of Asia-Europe partnership and cooperation. In this regard, they expressed their determination to eliminate all forms of intolerance and discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, among others.

47. Leaders commended the successful organization of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and looked ahead to Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics 2022, as opportunities for competition for athletes from around the world, which serves as a symbol of humanity's resilience.

48. Leaders welcomed and commended the work of the **ASEF**, whose activities foster mutual understanding and people-to-people exchange, forge closer links between ASEM governments and civil societies, disseminate ASEM-related information and activities, and promote ASEM's relevance and visibility. They encouraged ASEF to continue to align its activities and programmes closer to ASEM's priorities, and underlined the necessity for the ASEM Partners to continue to support ASEF through financial, personnel and project-related cooperation. They also highlighted the significance of both the 7th ASEF Public Diplomacy training in Siem Reap, Cambodia in 2019 and the virtual 8th ASEF Public Diplomacy Training in 2020 for providing practical skills-oriented training to young diplomats of ASEM Partners.

49. Leaders acknowledged the importance of collaboration and exchange between ASEM Partners in the ASEM Education Process as coordinated by the ASEM Education Secretariat, and recognized the important role of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 which will be presented to the ASEM Education Ministers during the ASEMME8 to be hosted by Thailand in December 2021. They welcomed the virtual ASEM Workshop on Youth Learners' Mobility in an Agile World organized by Thailand on 23-24 September 2021, and looked forward to further advancing ASEM cooperation in this area.

50. Leaders welcomed the **Asia-Europe Virtual Forum on Substandard and Falsified Medicines** (SFMs) hosted by Cambodia in collaboration with ASEF on 29-30 September 2020. They underscored the importance of supporting the WHO in strengthening national regulatory systems, quality control capacity and surveillance system on both online and offline sales.

51. Leaders noted the outcome and recommendations of the **11th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP11), 10th Asia-Europe Editors' Roundtable (ASEFERT10), and Asia-Europe Economic and Business Forum**, all organized by Cambodia in the run-up to the ASEM13 as a valuable input to ASEM activities. They also appreciated the organization of the **ASEM Cultural Festival**

(ASEMFest) to showcase the richness of artistic creativity and diversity in Asia and Europe.

52. Leaders thanked Cambodia as the Chair for the successful outcome of the ASEM13 via videoconference and looked forward to the **14th ASEM Summit** (ASEM14) to be held in Europe in 2023.

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