

**ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM STATEMENT ON COOPERATION IN THE
FIELD OF SECURITY OF AND IN THE USE OF ICTS IN THE CONTEXT OF
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

WE, the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN Regional Forum gathered today on the occasion of the 27th ASEAN Regional Forum on 12 September 2020 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam;

NOTING that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and means of telecommunication;

RECOGNISING the importance of ICTs security as well as the increasingly important role of ICTs security as a driver of global economic growth including in the context of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), and further emphasising ARF Participants' resolve to promote secure and resilient ICT, which can contribute to regional security and stability, while noting the role played by the private sector, the technical community, civil society, and relevant international organizations;

UNDERSCORING the aspirations of ARF Participants to the peaceful use of ICTs to promote a secure and stable ICT environment and to further the sustainable development of all countries, irrespective of their scientific and technological development;

STRESSING that an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment is essential for all, and requires effective cooperation among States to reduce risks to international peace and security. Understanding that it is in the interest of all States to promote the use of ICTs for peaceful purposes and to prevent conflict arising from their use;

NOTING the security risks and challenges posed by malicious ICT activities conducted by States and non-states actors, which have become a serious concern for ARF Participants;

ACKNOWLEDGING the work of ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the area of security of and in the use of ICTs, including the ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cyber Security, ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime Working Group on Cyber Crime, ASEAN Cyber Capacity Program, ASEAN Network Security Action Council, Cybersecurity Resilience and Information Sharing Platform for ASEAN Central Banks, East Asia Summit, ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in

the Use of ICTs, ARF Open Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflicts Stemming from the Use of Information and Communication Technologies and ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group Meeting on Cyber Security;

RECALLING *UNGA resolution 70/237 on the Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of International Security, East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Deepening Cooperation in the Security of Information and Communications Technologies and of the Digital Economy, ASEAN Leaders' 2018 Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, ASEAN Information and Communications Technologies Master Plan 2020, Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, ARF Foreign Affairs Ministers' 2012 Statement on Cooperation in Ensuring Cyber Security, and 2015 ARF Work Plan on Security of and in the Use of ICTs*, which underline the need to promote international cooperation, ensure security of and in the use of ICTs;

HEREBY DECIDE TO:

1. Foster an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment to prevent conflicts and crises by developing trust, confidence and cooperation among ARF Participants. This can be achieved through confidence building measures, information sharing, capacity building, and voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour as well as through the work and consensus reports of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on developments in the field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.
2. Recognise that COVID-19 demonstrated the international community's growing dependence on ICTs and support efforts to combat COVID-19 as well as post-pandemic recovery stage and other health-related challenges through responsible and effective use of digital technologies while ensuring protection of personal and of consumers data and privacy, improve research and development(R&D) technology capacities and applications, facilitate digitalization of the public and private sectors;
3. Foster cooperation to support a secure, resilient and sustainable digital infrastructure, promote, as appropriate, the synergy between relevant national initiatives and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 to strengthen regional connectivity and lay a solid foundation for

cooperation in ICT security;

4. Advance cooperation on security of and in the Use of ICTs through the work of relevant ARF mechanisms, such as Inter-Sessional Meeting on Security of and in the Use of ICTs and Open Ended Study Group on Confidence Building Measures to Reduce the Risk of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICTs, and the enhancement of capacity-building to strengthen security of and in the use of ICTs;
5. Promote international cooperation and assistance that can play an essential role in enabling States to secure ICTs and ensure their peaceful use;
6. Encourage regional efforts, promote confidence-building and transparency measures and support capacity-building and the dissemination of best practices;
7. Promote inclusive development of digital literacy and bridge the digital divides and development gap, provide assistance to States that may lack sufficient capacity to protect their ICT networks as well as pay special attention to vulnerable groups;
8. Endeavour to promote ICT security through cooperating in areas such as incident response, raising awareness on threats-related to the security of and in the use of ICTs, and sharing best practices which are relevant for maintaining ICT security and can contribute to the maintenance of regional peace and stability;
9. Promote cooperation, including to develop capacity necessary to respond to criminal and terrorist use of ICTs and for the implementation of confidence building measures.

Adopted on the Twelfth of September in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty (2020) at the 27th ASEAN Regional Forum in Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Statement ends