

**ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON
STRENGTHENED COOPERATION ON
MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION**

Building on the decision of the 21st Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar to issue the ARF Statement on Cooperation in Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Restoration from Marine Oil Spill Incidents,

Acknowledging that healthy marine ecosystems and resources are vital to food security, human health, and economic well-being in the Asia-Pacific region,

Recognizing that *prompt and effective action* at the local, national, regional, and international level is essential to minimize the impacts resulting from various threats to the marine environment, including marine pollution, ocean acidification, and unsustainable fishing practices,

Consistent with ARF Participants' commitment to cooperation and the preservation of the marine environment for the benefit of their citizens and future generations, *we endeavor* to work toward:

- *Reducing* pollution, including from excess nutrients to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.
- *Significantly reducing* the input of debris, especially plastics, into the marine environment so as to achieve measurable reductions of marine debris.
- *Curbing the increase* in ocean acidification by taking ambitious mitigation action.
- *Achieving* worldwide coverage of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network and significantly increase the number of trained monitors and managers.
- *Conserving* coastal and marine areas – especially areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem services – through supporting existing and establishing new effectively managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, based on the best scientific knowledge available. *Strengthening* cooperation on coastal and marine protected areas through exchanges of experiences and techniques on establishment and management.
- *Conducting* cooperation and exchanges of experiences and techniques on marine ecosystem restoration, and conservation of coastal and marine species as well as their habitats.

- *Reducing* the rate of loss of all natural habitats, and *significantly reducing* degradation and fragmentation.
- *Maintaining* or *restoring* stocks of fish at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield on an urgent basis, based on the implementation of science-based management plans and the minimization of bycatch, discards, and waste.
- *Cooperating* to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, in accordance with international law.
- *Supporting* the effective implementation of the provisions of international instruments related to fisheries, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing and its associated International Plans of Action and the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate IUU Fishing.