

ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement on Strengthening Humanitarian Mine Action Cooperation

We, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the People's Republic of China, gathered on the occasion of the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) Plus One Session with China in Vientiane, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on 26 July 2024;

DEPLORING the mass civilian casualties caused by landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in the region, and cognisant of the serious threat that landmines and other ERW pose to the safety of the people as well as to economic and social development;

APPLAUDING the tremendous efforts and achievements made by landmines and other ERW-affected ASEAN Member States on mine action in recent years;

NOTING that many ASEAN Member States are still facing diverse challenges, including in carrying out humanitarian demining efforts along the border areas, in putting an end to landmines and other ERW threats;

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of addressing humanitarian aspects of landmines and other ERW through a coordinated and integrated approach;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) to promote mine action cooperation;

RECOGNISING the role of ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) in promoting ASEAN's efforts to address the issue of landmines and other ERW for interested ASEAN Member States and raise awareness of the danger of landmines and other ERW among affected communities;

ALSO RECOGNISING that strengthening mine action cooperation is crucial for sustaining peace, security, stability, prosperity and sustainable development of the region;

APPRECIATING the valuable support that China has provided to some landmines and other ERW-affected ASEAN Member States since 1998 as well as ARMAC, which highlights ASEAN and China's friendship and cooperation, while taking note of China's vision to build a peaceful, safe and secure, prosperous, beautiful, and amicable home in the region; and

REAFFIRMING the commitment to advance ASEAN-China relations by forging closer cooperation in line with important documents such as the Joint Statement of the Special Summit to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Peace, Security, Prosperity and Sustainable Development and the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2021-2025) and its Annex to Advance the ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership;

WE HEREBY:

1. Emphasise the importance of humanitarian mine action, enhance people's awareness of the danger of landmines and other ERW, accelerate the restoration of the residual contaminated land, provide appropriate medical and rehabilitation assistance to the victims, and allow people to return to their homeland in dignity, safety and security;
2. Integrate humanitarian mine action into the sustainable development agenda of the region, advance regional and cross-border cooperation and resource mobilisation, including exploring various financial instruments for mine action, and enhance the cost-effectiveness of resources;
3. Optimise existing mechanisms such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action, and carry out more practical cooperation in areas such as personnel training, standard setting and joint exercise, to enhance the capacity of ASEAN Member States for mine action;
4. Support the work of ARMAC including in advancing cooperation on the use of technology in demining to further reduce the risk of human casualties, promoting innovation, enhancing the effectiveness of mine action operations, convening regional high-level and technical working group meetings, encouraging the active participation of multiple stakeholders, and promoting the sharing of experience and achievements;
5. Strengthen cooperation with United Nations (UN) agencies such as the UN Mine Action Service and the UN Development Programme, actively explore South-South and trilateral cooperation, and call on all parties to step up support to landmines and other ERW-affected ASEAN Member States, including through ARMAC; and
6. Enhance closer communication and coordination between ASEAN Member States and China at the UN to promote cooperation on mine action that contributes to the maintenance of peace, security, stability, development, and prosperity in the region and the world.
