

Overview of ASEAN-Republic of Korea Dialogue Relations

Introduction

1. ASEAN and the Republic of Korea (ROK) initiated sectoral dialogue relations in November 1989. The ROK was accorded a full Dialogue Partner status by ASEAN at the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in July 1991 in Kuala Lumpur. The partnership was elevated to a Summit level in 1997 in Kuala Lumpur. The ROK acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 2004.
2. The ASEAN-ROK relationship reached a new height with the signing of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership at the 8th ASEAN-ROK Summit on 30 November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao PDR and the adoption of the ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action (POA) to implement the Joint Declaration at the 9th ASEAN-ROK Summit on 13 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
3. The 13th ASEAN-ROK Summit in October 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam agreed to elevate ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations from comprehensive cooperation to strategic partnership. The Leaders adopted the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity and its Plan of Action for the period of 2011-2015. The new Plan of Action for the period 2016-2020 was adopted in 2015.
4. The ROK established its Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta in September 2012 and appointed its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN in October 2012.
5. In 2014, ASEAN and the ROK celebrated the 25th Year of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations with a Commemorative Summit held on 11-12 December 2014 in Busan. The Commemorative Summit adopted the *Joint Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations: Our Future Vision of ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership, "Building Trust, Bringing Happiness"* renewing the commitments to bring the ASEAN-ROK relations to new heights.
6. In 2017, President Moon Jae-in of ROK announced the "New Southern Policy" which aims to substantially elevate partnership between ASEAN and the ROK to a higher level. The new policy is built upon the "3 P" pillars (People, Prosperity, and Peace) corresponding with the 3 pillars of ASEAN Community, with People placed at the center of the policy. The elevation of cooperation is to be achieved through strengthening bilateral ties with ASEAN Member States and reinforcing the ROK's participation in ASEAN led-mechanisms.

Political and Security Cooperation

7. ASEAN-ROK cooperation in the political and security fields has been strengthened through existing mechanisms such as the ASEAN-ROK Summit, Ministerial Meetings, ASEAN-ROK Dialogue and Senior Officials Meetings. The ROK has been actively engaging in ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the APT, the EAS, ARF, and ADMM Plus.

8. The ROK became a participant of the ARF since its inception in 1994 and plays an active role in its evolution since then. The ROK co-chaired the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS) with Indonesia and the United States for the period of 2012-2014. The ROK has completed its co-chairmanship for the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief (ARF ISM on DR) with Thailand, with the convening of the 17th ARF ISM on DR on 4 April 2018 in Seoul. The ROK co-chairs the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ARF ISM on NPD) with Indonesia and Japan for the 2018-2020 cycle, with the most recent event - the 10th ARF ISM on NPD - held on 5-6 April 2018 in Seoul. In the ARF Inter-Sessional Year 2017-2018, the ROK co-chaired the ARF Workshop on Typhoon Disaster Risk Reduction and Damage Mitigation with Thailand and China in December 2017 and the ARF Workshop on Peacekeeping Operations: Cooperation in Capacity Building and Developing Partnership with the United Nations with Viet Nam and Canada in December 2017. The ROK is also an active contributor to the ARF Annual Security Outlook since its first publication in 2000.

9. The ROK has taken an active role in the ADMM-Plus in fostering practical cooperation in its seven priority areas, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), maritime security, military medicine, counter terrorism, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian mine action and cyber security. The ROK co-chaired the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations (EWG on PKO) with Cambodia for the period of 2014-2017 and is currently co-chairing the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security with Singapore for the period of 2017-2020. In addition, the ROK participated in three live exercises conducted in the second ADMM-Plus three-year cycle of 2014-2017, namely, the ADMM-Plus Humanitarian Mine Action and Peacekeeping Operations: Exercise Force 18 in Pune, India, on 2-8 March 2016, the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security and Counterterrorism Exercise in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore on 2-12 May 2016, and the ADMM-Plus Military Medicine and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise (AMHEx) in Chonburi Province, Thailand, on 1-11 September 2016.

10. The ASEAN-ROK Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism was signed by the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and the ROK at the margins of the 38th AMM in July 2005 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The ASEAN-ROK Senior Officials' Consultations on Transnational Crime (SOMTC+ROK Consultations) was held for the first time on 9 June 2006 in Bali, Indonesia. At the 9th SOMTC + ROK Consultation in June 2015 in Siem Reap, ASEAN and the ROK finalised an ASEAN-ROK Work Plan on the Cooperation on Combating and Preventing Transnational Crimes. At the 10th SOMTC+ROK on 25 May 2016, the two sides agreed to revise the said Work Plan taking into account the new ASEAN-ROK Plan of Action 2016-2020. The 12th SOMTC + ROK Consultation was held on 26 September 2018 in Putrajaya, Malaysia which noted that ASEAN and ROK will continue to develop an ASEAN-ROK work plan on the cooperation on combating and preventing transnational crimes.

11. ASEAN and the ROK have commenced the anti-narcotics cooperation through the implementation of six projects on the Knowledge Transfer Programme on Narcotics Crime conducted from 2007 to 2013. At the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in December 2014 in Busan, the ROK, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in combatting transnational crimes such as illicit drugs. The ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matter (ASOD) – ROK Coordination Meeting has been held seven times since 2011 to 2018.

12. The ROK has been supporting the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in the promotion of human rights in the areas of implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) and management of environmental impact assessment from a human right-based approach.

Economic Cooperation

14. On trade and investment cooperation, the ROK remains an important partner to ASEAN. In 2017, the ROK was the fifth largest trading partner of ASEAN with two-way trade reaching USD 152.5 billion, a significant increase of 22.8 per cent (year-on-year). ASEAN exports to the ROK and ASEAN imports from the ROK respectively increased by 20 per cent to USD 54.9 billion, and by 24.4 per cent to USD 97.7 billion. ASEAN's trade deficit with the ROK has continued to increase to reach USD 42.8 billion for the same period. Meanwhile, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow from ROK to ASEAN stood at USD 5.3 billion, making ROK as the ASEAN's fifth largest source of FDI.

15. The Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK was signed in Kuala Lumpur on 13 December 2005. To achieve the objectives of the Framework Agreement, the ASEAN-ROK Trade in Goods (AKTIG) Agreement was signed on 24 August 2006 and took effect in 2007. Meanwhile, the ASEAN-ROK Trade in Services Agreement was signed on 21 November 2007 in Singapore and came into force on 1 May 2009 and the ASEAN-ROK Investment Agreement was signed on 2 June 2009 and took full effect on 1 September 2009. Subsequently, the ASEAN-ROK Free Trade Agreement (AKFTA) came into effect on 1 January 2010. At the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit in December 2014, the Leaders agreed to expand two-way trade volume to USD 200 billion by 2020, including through maximizing the utilisation of the AKFTA.

16. The Third Protocol to Amend the AKTIG Agreement was signed by all Parties on 22 November 2015, aiming at boosting bilateral trade through new commitments on customs procedures and trade facilitation and the inclusion of the Parties' line-by-line Tariff Reduction Schedules (TRS). The Third Protocol has entered into force for the ROK and all ASEAN Member States, except Indonesia and Viet Nam, which are still undertaking their internal procedures for ratification.

17. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the ROK established a special fund called ASEAN-ROK Economic Cooperation (AKEC) Fund with initial contribution of US\$531,915 in 2008 for the implementation of cooperation projects under the purview of the ASEAN-ROK Working Group on Economic Cooperation (AK-WGEC) established in

2006. Since 2011, the ROK has annually contributed US\$500,000 towards the AKEC Fund. As of 10 April 2018, 69 projects have been approved through AK-WGEC to support the implementation of the AKFTA.

18. At the 23rd SEOM-ROK Consultations held in May 2015, the ROK proposed for an ASEAN-ROK Industrial Technology Cooperation. Since 2016, a joint ASEAN-ROK programme entitled Technology Advice and Solutions from ROK (TASK) has been implemented by the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME). The TASK Programme aims to share ROK's industrial technology with ASEAN, promote technology cooperation, and contribute to the industrial development of ASEAN. The project is in-line with ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (SAPSMED) 2016-2025 in promoting productivity, technology and innovation, particularly in promoting technology usage and its application for business innovation.

20. On transport cooperation, the ASEAN-ROK Transport Cooperation Roadmap was endorsed at the 2nd ASEAN-ROK Transport Ministers (ATM+ROK) Meeting on 12 November 2010 in Brunei Darussalam to set out the potential projects and activities of cooperation to be undertaken for both sides. The Roadmap was revised and adopted at the 5th ATM+ROK Meeting on 28 November 2014 in Mandalay, Myanmar. For the period of 2018-2020, projects and activities of cooperation under the Roadmap will be conducted in the areas of, among others, professional capacity building program, masterplan, infrastructure feasibility study and project. ASEAN and the ROK are also committed to further enhancing air transport connectivity between the two sides. At the 19th ASEAN-ROK Summit in November 2017 in Manila, the Leaders looked forward to the convening of the 2nd Meeting of the ASEAN-ROK Working Group on Regional Air Services Arrangements (AKWG RASA) in 2018, for the conclusion of a more liberal and mutually beneficial air services agreement.

21. On information and communication technology (ICT) cooperation, the ROK has implemented a series of activities under ASEAN-ROK ICT Partnership 2017-2021, focusing on strategic areas such as innovation, connectivity, human resource development and information security. The 17th ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Senior Officials Meeting and Related Meeting held on 1 December 2017 in Siem Reap, Cambodia endorsed the 2018 ASEAN-ROK ICT Work plan to further extend cooperation with the aim of fostering innovation, developing digital skills, establishing IT centre as well as enhancing information security.

22. The ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC) was established in 13 March 2009 in Seoul, the ROK. The Centre plays a pivotal role to increase the volume of trade, accelerate investment flow, invigorate tourism, and enrich cultural exchanges between ASEAN and the ROK. Since 2013, AKC regularly organises the ASEAN Connectivity Forum in Seoul, ROK. The Forum has been annually organised to keep the ROK business communities abreast of the connectivity-related infrastructure projects in the 10 ASEAN Member States, thus contributing to connected and integrated ASEAN as well as mutually beneficial partnership between ASEAN and the ROK. In 2018, the AKC have been

implementing a series of programs under the collective theme of “Connecting People, Sharing Prosperity.” These programs will focus on the four key elements of “People-centered Community-building,” “People-to-People Exchange,” “Sustainable Development,” and “Prosperity and Industry 4.0.”

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

23. ASEAN and the ROK put an emphasis on people to people exchange with a view to deepen friendship and understanding among their people. Various projects and activities have been undertaken to increase people to people exchanges between the two sides including annual programmes such as the ASEAN-ROK Media People Exchanges Programme and the ASEAN-ROK Film Leaders Incubator (FLY), both of which have been implemented since 2012.

24. In the area of youth, ASEAN and the ROK have conducted seven recurring projects since 1998 including ASEAN-Korea Youth Exchange and Cultural Community Building Programme; ASEAN-Korea Frontiers Forum; ASEAN-Korea Youth Square; ASEAN-Korea Forum and Advanced Seminar; ASEAN-Korea Future-oriented Cooperation Project: Youth Exchange Programme; ASEAN-Korea Youth Taekwondo Cultural Exchange Camp; and ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Project on Education and Exchange Program for Young Scholars in Women’s Studies. These projects are intended to provide multi-cultural experience and to deepen partnership between ASEAN and the ROK. In addition, a new flagship project of ASEAN Youth in Action, which aims to create an immersive environment for youths from ASEAN and ROK to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the societal and cultural needs of different communities in ASEAN was implemented in 2017 - 2018.

26. Cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK in education is also progressing well. The ROK has convened seven Training Projects for ASEAN children’s librarians since 2010. This Training Project is aimed at developing children’s library service and enhancing professionalism of children’s librarians in ASEAN Member States. The ROK has also provided funding for ASEAN-ROK Scholarship for Korean Studies Programme coordinated by the ASEAN University Network (AUN). The progress on the establishment of the ASEAN-ROK Cyber University carried out by AUN and Seoul Cyber University is also going well. CLMV countries and the ROK have agreed in principle that the e-learning centers will be established in the following institutions: Institute Technology of Cambodia (ITC); National University of Laos (NUOL); University Technology (UT) in Myanmar and Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Viet Nam.

27. Cooperation between ASEAN and the ROK on culture has been promoted including through various activities during the ASEAN-ROK Culture Exchange Year in 2017. The ASEAN Culture House, which was established in Busan, the ROK on 1 September 2017, is the first of its kind among ASEAN’s dialogue partners and serves as a venue to further promote mutual understanding between the peoples of ASEAN and the ROK.

28. ASEAN and the ROK have implemented a number of cooperative projects in the areas of social welfare and development with the focus on children, women, older people, people with disabilities and migrant workers.

29. On forest cooperation, the Agreement between ASEAN and the ROK on Forest Cooperation (AFoCo) was signed and entered into force on 5 August 2012 for 2 years, and subsequently was extended in August 2014 for another two years, until August 2016. Projects and activities are on-going under this Agreement. Meanwhile, the Agreement on the Establishment of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), which was adopted in September 2015, entered into force on 27 April 2018 upon five ratifications by the ROK, Bhutan, Viet Nam, Myanmar and Timor Leste.

30. On environment cooperation, ASEAN-ROK cooperation to address the issue of land and forest degradation has been strengthened through a flagship project on Restoration of Degraded Ecosystem and Conservation of Biodiversity in the ASEAN Region (AKECOP). The AKECOP project phase I to IX were implemented from 2000 to 2018. ASEAN and ROK also published a "Field Guide to the ASEAN Waterbirds" as a part of the AKECOP project.

31. In the area of disaster management, ASEAN and the ROK launched the ASEAN Science-Based Disaster Management Platform (ASDMP) and Research Roadmap on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) at the APEC Climate Center (APCC) - ASEAN Disaster Management Final Regional Symposium held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 4 December 2017. The ASEAN Science-Based Disaster Management Web Platform serves as a tool to bridge the gaps between scientists and policymakers and allows them to collect scientific technology and research information related to disaster management, making it easier for policy research and policy development for disaster management and risk reduction in ASEAN.

Connectivity and Narrowing Development Gap

32. ASEAN and the ROK have developed a platform of cooperation on connectivity through the meetings between the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee (ACCC) and the ROK's Task Force on ASEAN Connectivity. At the 2nd ACCC + ROK's Task Force on ASEAN Connectivity Meeting on 23 October 2014, both sides agreed to undertake internal consultations on potential flagship projects to be selected for implementation consideration. Areas of cooperation include construction of two missing links on the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link, regional inland waterways, and ASEAN-ROK air services agreements. At the 3rd Meeting of ACCC and the ROK Task Force on ASEAN Connectivity held in July 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia, the ROK expressed its interest to prioritise Initiative 14 (Establish new vocational training programmes and common qualifications across ASEAN Member States, in accordance with national circumstances of each ASEAN Member States) as part of their support for the implementation of the MPAC 2025. The ROK participated at the 9th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium in Singapore on 6 September 2018 in Singapore and the ACCC

Consultations with Dialogue Partners and Other External Partners on 7 September 2018. The ROK reiterated its support to implement Initiative 14 of MPAC 2025 (and expressed its interest to support in Initiatives 6 (open data) and 10 (standard harmonisation) of MPAC 2025).

34. The 1st ASEAN-ROK Infrastructure Ministerial Meeting was held on 17 September 2018 in Seoul, ROK. Under the theme of ‘Infrastructure development and public land use’ and ‘Sustainable smart city and infrastructure’, this meeting discussed ASEAN-ROK bilateral cooperation projects in the fields of smart city development, smart infrastructure and efficient land use.

35. The ROK has been supporting ASEAN efforts in narrowing the development gap through the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) projects. The ROK had contributed USD 5 million to support five IAI projects between 2003 and 2007, which were undertaken by KOICA. The ROK’s supports also include sharing its experiences in economic and social development by dispatching volunteers under its World Friends Korea initiative. The ROK has also expressed its continued support for the implementation of the IAI Work Plan III and other sub-regional economic cooperation frameworks, including the Mekong-ROK Plan of Action (2017-2020) adopted at the Seventh Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on 1 September 2017, in Busan, the ROK.

The ROK’s Support to Development Cooperation

36. The ROK Government launched the ASEAN-ROK Special Cooperation Fund (SCF) in 1990 with an aim to enhance people-to-people exchanges between the two sides. In 1996, the ASEAN-ROK Future-Oriented Cooperation Project Fund (FOCF) was also launched in order to implement cooperation projects in the fields of human resource development, science and technology, governance, culture and sports, and others. The volume of the annual fund of SCF and FOCF has been gradually increased to USD 5 million in 2010 and USD 7 million in 2015. In 2017, ASEAN and the ROK agreed to merge the SCF and FOCF into ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund (AKCF) to provide funding for the implementation of cooperation projects initiated by ASEAN Member States and the ROK under the programme-based approach of the New ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Framework. For 2017-2020, the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Framework focuses on three focal areas: (i) education, (ii) environment, and (iii) culture.

37. The ASEAN-ROK Programme Management Team (AKPMT) was established in December 2016 to work for the effective utilization, management and execution of AKCF funded projects. Under the coordination between AKPMT, three workshops on the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Mechanism were successfully convened in Hanoi, Vietnam on 3 April 2017, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 17 August 2017 and Vientiane, Lao PDR on 3 April 2018 respectively.

