

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
10 January 2020

Original: English

Letter dated 9 January 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Viet Nam, the Security Council will hold a briefing on 23 January 2020 on the theme “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations” under the agenda item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”.

In that regard, Viet Nam has prepared a concept note (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Dang Dinh Quy**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 9 January 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council briefing on the theme “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations” under the agenda item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”, to be held on 23 January 2020

Introduction

1. Guided by Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security has steadily expanded. This is particularly relevant in today’s increasingly interconnected world with many multifaceted challenges, such as terrorism, transnational crimes and climate change, which should no longer be labelled as national or regional issues. The active involvement of regional and subregional organizations as reliable partners of the United Nations is crucial for the delivery of the Organization’s mandate. In its presidential statement dated 6 August 2013 (S/PRST/2013/12), the Security Council expressed “its intention to consider further steps to promote closer and more operational cooperation, as appropriate, between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations”

Background

Association of Southeast Asian Nations as an important contributor to regional and global peace and security

2. Founded in 1967, at a time of turmoil in South-East Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has opened up a new chapter in the history of the region. With the full participation of all 10 current members since 1999, ASEAN has successfully rendered unity, trust and friendship to the region. Among its biggest successes since its inception, ASEAN has helped to prevent the outbreak of major conflicts and to secure an environment of greater peace, security and prosperity for 650 million people in the region.

3. Its significant achievements are largely attributable to the efforts of ASEAN in shaping and sharing norms to govern relations among its member States and with external partners. The ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations, among other instruments, have laid a firm foundation for sustainable inter-State peace. Traditional security issues have been well managed through dialogue and consultation based on the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, such as non-interference in internal affairs; respect for independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity; and renunciation of aggression and of the threat or use of force or other actions in any manner inconsistent with international law. This approach of consultation, non-confrontation and consensus-building, collectively referred to as the “ASEAN way”, helps to create and preserve a climate of trust and confidence for member States to transcend differences, past and future, and work together in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

4. Another important contribution by ASEAN is its effective response to emerging non-traditional security issues, including terrorism and violent extremism,

cybersecurity, transnational crime, human trafficking, illicit drugs, piracy and armed robbery at sea and climate change. The impacts of these issues go well beyond the regional dimension. Cognizant of these growing threats, ASEAN has taken concrete action to prevent and address these issues. Various mechanisms and frameworks, such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters and the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, have been developed to enhance information-sharing, increase the exchange of experiences and best practices and strengthen regional and national capacities and capabilities.

5. Furthermore, ASEAN is widely recognized for facilitating dialogue and cooperation at both the regional and global levels. Through a web of ASEAN-initiated mechanisms, such as various ASEAN-plus-one mechanisms, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus, ASEAN has engaged partners from within and beyond the region to consult and cooperate on issues with an impact on peace and security. Cooperation with external partners is explored and expanded through the network of 91 non-ASEAN ambassadors accredited to ASEAN to date, as well as interaction between ASEAN and other regional and international organizations in Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa. These platforms successfully promote dialogue, confidence-building and conflict prevention and greatly contribute to efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Review of the partnership between Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations

6. The partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations on the common goal of peace, security and stability has continuously evolved. The first two summits between ASEAN and the United Nations, in 2000 and 2005, started a high-level dialogue between the two organizations on various subjects, including peace and security.

7. In 2006, ASEAN was granted observer status by the General Assembly and subsequently, in 2007, a memorandum of understanding was signed to establish a partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations for the full range of cooperation. Ten ASEAN-United Nations Summits have been held since 2000, including the most recent one in 2019. The annual ASEAN-United Nations Ministerial Meeting has been held since 2010 as a platform for the engagement between ASEAN, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

8. This partnership became even more strategic with the adoption of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership in 2011, the establishment of a United Nations Liaison Officer in 2013 and, in particular, the adoption of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership (2016–2020). The Plan of Action contains 22 action lines in the field of peace and security, including non-proliferation, mine action, women and peace and security, counter-terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters, preventing violent extremism, cybercrime, illicit drugs, human trafficking and cross-border security, of which more than 90 per cent have been implemented.

9. Collaboration in peace operations and peacebuilding continues to be strengthened, including through activities conducted through national focal points of ASEAN member States and the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network. As at October 2019, ASEAN member States had deployed approximately 5,000 military and police personnel, as well as technical experts, to United Nations peacekeeping missions. During the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations in April 2018, the United Nations announced the

expansion of a triangular partnership project to the ASEAN region, which commenced in late 2018.

Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations: the way forward

10. The steady growth in the partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations serves as a strong foundation for the two sides to elevate cooperation and interaction to a higher level. In the face of today's growing peace and security challenges, further enhancement of the cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations could generate new ways to remain responsive and relevant in peacekeeping, conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

11. Greater interaction between ASEAN and the Security Council would further contribute to the successful completion of the Plan of Action (2016–2020) and sustain momentum as a new plan of action between the two organizations is developed for the period 2021–2025.

Objectives and guiding questions

12. Against that background, Viet Nam, as the President of the Security Council, plans to hold the first ever briefing on the theme "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations" on 23 January 2020 with a view to exploring ideas, ways and means to advance peace and security cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations. Participants are expected to focus on the following suggested questions:

1. How can ASEAN better complement the work of the United Nations in addressing threats to peace and security?

2. How can the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular better engage ASEAN in international common efforts with respect to conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction?

3. In the light of emerging non-traditional, cross-sectoral threats to peace and security, how can ASEAN and the United Nations pursue effective coordination and synergies between ASEAN sectoral bodies and relevant United Nations agencies?

4. What are potential areas and forms of cooperation for a more practical synergy between ASEAN and the United Nations in contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security?

Format

13. High-level representatives from ASEAN and the United Nations are expected to brief the Council, followed by interventions by members of the Council.