

JOINT DECLARATION ON A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND AND AUSTRALIA

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha of the Kingdom of Thailand and Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia agree to elevate the existing bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership.

Thailand and Australia have a long-standing partnership based on enduring goodwill and spirit of friendship since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1952. We agree to elevate existing relations to a Strategic Partnership to mark a new chapter of our enhanced relations and to fully realise the potential of our cooperation.

Our Strategic Partnership is founded on the commitment to strengthen bilateral relations for the continuing prosperity of our countries, as well as peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. It is built upon the Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation (2005) and other agreements and mechanisms, which encompass areas of cooperation in political security, trade and investment, social development, people-to-people relations and other areas of shared interests. It lays the foundation for our two countries to explore new opportunities and position our countries to respond to the rapid pace of change in regional dynamics and common challenges.

In declaring this Strategic Partnership, we reaffirm our shared interests in an open, inclusive, prosperous, and resilient Indo-Pacific region and restate a strong commitment to the ASEAN-centred regional architecture, particularly the East Asia Summit as the region's premier Leaders-led forum for discussion of strategic issues. We support the principles articulated in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, including ASEAN centrality, openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit, and respect for sovereignty and international law. We also reiterate the importance of the Mekong sub-region to regional peace and security and recommit ourselves to strengthening sub-regional frameworks, including the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). We will deepen our ties based on adherence to the United Nations Charter, the principle of free and open markets and resisting protectionism, the rules-based multilateral system, as well as mutually respected rules and norms that have shaped our relations for many decades.

On the basis of these guiding principles and objectives, Thailand and Australia agreed to forge our Strategic Partnership in the following areas:

Strengthen Political and Security Engagement

With a view to supporting our shared regional interests and addressing regional and global security challenges, we will strengthen political engagement through regular high-level exchanges and meetings, as well as strategic political dialogues and consultations through bilateral and regional mechanisms. We will establish biennial meetings between the Foreign Ministers under the Strategic Partnership and expand existing Senior Officials' Talks to 2+2 meetings involving the Heads of our Foreign Affairs and Defence departments.

In view of the evolving strategic shifts in the region, we will enhance cooperation in key areas, such as defence, law enforcement, border enforcement, cyber affairs, counter-terrorism, anti-money laundering, and combating transnational crime, including human trafficking, child exploitation and drug trafficking. We will advance shared objectives by deepening security and defence senior officials' engagement, while exploring new bilateral dialogues, intensifying related activities, and expanding networking and information sharing. We will update our defence cooperation framework through a reinvigoration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Government

of Australia concerning the Australian Defence Cooperation Programme signed in 1986 to better reflect the depth of our defence ties.

On regional security, we affirm the importance of maintaining peace, stability, maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the seas, including the lawful exploitation of natural resources, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We reaffirm that the 1982 UNCLOS is the basis for establishing rights and duties of the coastal states over maritime zones and agree that UNCLOS sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We emphasise the importance of non-militarisation of disputed features and the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may complicate the situation.

Expand Economic Engagement and Growth

Recognising the increasing economic interdependence between our two countries, as well as supporting economic recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving robust economic growth, we will deepen existing economic cooperation and integration under the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) and under relevant sub-regional, regional and multilateral frameworks, including the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and expand ways and means to increase opportunities and resilience for our economies.

We will increase our efforts to advance cooperation in key economic areas such as trade and investment, regional connectivity, and resilient and sustainable logistics and supply chains to ensure the availability of essential goods and services in times of need. We will promote quality, sustainable and transparent infrastructure development that upholds robust standards and avoids unsustainable debt burdens. In accelerating economic recovery and the growth of businesses such as start-ups and SMEs, we will strive to cooperate extensively in the field of digital economy by enhancing our countries' digital transformation, harnessing digital opportunities and supporting development of a digital-ready workforce.

In order to sustain economic growth and continuing prosperity, we will explore new avenues to complement existing cooperation frameworks with a view to promoting trade, investment, and market accessibility, as well as new areas of cooperation that bring increased momentum to our economic relations and partnership. Based on the needs of beneficiary countries and our expertise, we will also work closely together as development partners for economic growth and sustainability.

Intensify Sectoral Collaboration

In supporting and sustaining long-term socioeconomic development, we recognise the need to intensify collaboration in key sectors that have significant impact on our peoples' lives and livelihoods.

We fully acknowledge that Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) play an essential role in creating new value chains for economies while helping to safeguard sustainable development. Based on relevant agreements and existing mechanisms, we intend to strengthen cooperation in STI that has wide application to other areas, including education and research, public health, disaster risk reduction, natural resources and the environment. We will explore opportunities in related sectors such as water, energy, emerging technologies, and the development of Industry 4.0 and digital technology, as well as measurement science that supports all sectors. We will also continue to collaborate on STI through bilateral and regional mechanisms.

We will expand our partnership in education at all levels through innovations and digital tools for online capacity-building, information sharing and exchanges of best practices, as well as intensifying research and

vocational education and training (VET) cooperation. To strengthen health security, we will continue to explore new mechanisms and formal technical partnerships between relevant agencies to better detect and respond rapidly to new and emerging diseases. Recognising the importance of agriculture to both nations, we will pursue further collaboration to support business to adopt smart solutions to improve farming productivity and sustainability; share knowledge on agriculture forecasting; and continue to cooperate on customs and biosecurity to facilitate trade. In safeguarding our environment for future generations, we will cooperate in areas such as alternative and renewable energy, low-emissions technologies, climate-resilient environments, marine pollution, and water and waste management.

Enhance People-to-People Links

People-to-people interactions are central to every aspect of our relations. We will work towards greater linkages of our peoples in every sector, including education, human resource development, and especially tourism which is a significant contributor to our economies, to promote COVID-19 recovery and reconnect the region through exploring resuming travel links when safe to do so. We will continue to facilitate extensive governmental, commercial and cultural exchanges from all sectors and parts of society, including civil society and NGOs. We will also support parliamentary exchanges to advance mutual understanding between our political representatives.

To realise the Strategic Partnership, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Prime Minister of Australia agree to assign the two Foreign Ministries to coordinate with relevant ministries and agencies to formulate a Joint Plan of Action in the above-mentioned areas.

Done in duplicate at Bangkok and Canberra, this 13th day of November 2020 (B.E. 2563) in the English language.

General

(Ret.)

(Prayut Chan-o-Cha)

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

(Scott Morrison)

Prime Minister of Australia