

## **AOIP VISION GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

AOIP Vision Group Conference  
Bali, Indonesia, 6-8 March 2024

### **Preamble**

1. We, the participants of the AOIP Vision Group Conference, held on 6 - 8 March 2024 at Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, are individuals from diverse backgrounds and various countries, including:

- Australia	- Lao PDR	- The United Kingdom
- Brunei Darussalam	- Malaysia	- The United States
- Cambodia	- Myanmar	- Timor Leste
- China	- The Philippines	- Viet Nam.
- India	- Singapore	
- Indonesia	- South Korea	
- Japan	- Thailand	
2. We have come together in our personal capacities to discuss and deliberate on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) with a view to identifying opportunities and challenges related to its implementation and the way forward.
3. We reiterate the importance of the AOIP principles of ASEAN centrality; openness; transparency; inclusivity; a rules-based framework; good governance; respect for sovereignty; non-intervention; complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks; equality; mutual respect; mutual trust; mutual benefit; and respect for international law such as the UN Charter, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and other relevant UN treaties and conventions, the ASEAN Charter and various ASEAN treaties and agreements and the EAS Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (2011).
4. On the basis of our frank and open deliberations, we recognize the continuing relevance of AOIP and its principles for ensuring a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for all in the region.
5. We share the belief that amidst a climate of declining trust among states and increasing geopolitical rivalries in the region, we must realize the potential of AOIP as a game-changing initiative that can transform rivalry into cooperation and deficits of trust into mutual confidence.
6. While we recognize the efforts undertaken to mainstream AOIP thus far, there remains a gap between AOIP's strategic ambition and its practical implementation. For AOIP to really be a game-changing initiative, there is a pressing need for a more strategic and impact-oriented approach to its implementation.

7. To pave the way forward, our discussion identified several issues to be addressed, as well as some ideas to be developed further.

## Recommendations

8. **We recognize that there may be different interpretations as to what some AOIP principles mean in practice. Consequently, there is a need for continuous dialog to develop mutual understanding between Indo-Pacific countries.** In view of evolving regional dynamics, the rise of minilateral groupings, and geopolitical power shifts, ASEAN centrality is not to be taken for granted and needs to be constantly earned.
9. **We call for the more explicit inclusion of climate change and energy transition in the AOIP framework, potentially by elevating climate change into a major area of cooperation.** While we recognize that the existing four areas of AOIP cooperation – maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, and economic cooperation – are crucial priorities for the region, we believe that climate change and energy transition are equally important. More explicit inclusion of climate change would provide greater opportunities to bring about “confluence of interest” among countries of the region and beyond, thus enhancing a strategy of developing trust through addressing common challenges.
10. **We share the view that there needs to be institutional strengthening and innovation in ASEAN to implement AOIP more effectively.** While ASEAN’s role as a convening power is widely respected, the organization needs to go beyond this. ASEAN needs to develop a stronger capacity to successfully carry and monitor more impactful initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. To do this, a thorough and comprehensive assessment of existing mechanisms for the implementation of AOIP initiatives is needed.
11. **We agree that in order for cooperation to have a transformational impact in the region, there is a need to establish more robust criteria and standards for AOIP projects.** We need to place emphasis on quality rather than quantity, so as to ensure that projects can temper geopolitical rivalries and enhance confidence-building more effectively.
12. **We call for greater effort to link connectivity initiatives, and to ensure projects are more people-centered.** We appreciate the contribution of various countries to strengthening connectivity in the region. At the same time, we also recognize that there are concerns about “disconnection” between different initiatives due to geopolitical competition or interoperability issues. We underscore the importance of expanding the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor beyond the Indo-Pacific region by utilizing established connectivity initiatives in other regions so as to connect Southeast Asia, South Asia, Northeast Asia, and Europe.
13. **We underscore the necessity of ASEAN countries actively contributing to, and adopting common positions at, the United Nations’ Summit of the Future scheduled for later this year.** Given ASEAN’s track record as a

successful regional organization, ASEAN must play a key role in the efforts to reinvigorate multilateralism and reform its institutions.

14. **We emphasize the need to promote stronger participation from all stakeholders, including the private sector, in the implementation of AOIP.** We recognize the importance of the public-private partnership (PPP) approach to accelerating the implementation of AOIP initiatives, which is aligned to efforts to achieve the SDG targets.
15. **We highlight the need to further develop cooperation to ensure that digital transformation benefits all people of the region.** We firmly believe that digitalization provides an unmatched window of opportunity for some Indo-Pacific countries due to their young populations and the rapid development of information and communications technology (ICT). Digitalization provides a timely means for propelling progress in the achievement of the SDGs and unlocking new economic opportunities.
16. **We see the ASEAN Indo-Pacific Forum (AIPF) held in 2023 as a potentially useful platform for developing a strategy to implement the AOIP.** However, we recommend that it should be held on an annual basis with a clearer strategic thrust in its planning and implementation. We also recommend that the agenda put more emphasis on strategic issues particularly collaboration and confidence-building measures between major powers.
17. **We share the view that there is a need for more regular and institutionalized channels to develop greater mutual understanding between countries in the Indo-Pacific in the context of AOIP implementation. We intend to institutionalize the AOIP Vision Group Conference into an annual meeting to help realize the objectives of AOIP.**