



18<sup>th</sup> Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting

New York, United States of America

20 September 2023

**Bahrain Declaration**

*“Post-Pandemic Sustainable Recovery”*

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, the State of Kuwait, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Sultanate of Oman, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the State of Palestine, the Republic of the Philippines, the State of Qatar, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Singapore, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam;

**HAVING met** in New York, the United States of America, for the 18<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) under the theme “Post-Pandemic Sustainable Recovery”;

**REAFFIRMING** the prevailing commitment of the Member States from the meeting in Thailand in 2002, and the ACD Summits held in Kuwait in 2012 and in Thailand in 2016, to the objectives, roles and principles of the Dialogue as a pan-Asian platform wherein high-level policy makers can exchange ideas and experiences that will contribute to future regional development of an Asian community;

**GUIDED** by the principles of informal dialogue, inclusiveness and complementarity, including shared interests with a commitment to strengthening cooperation, which constitute the basis of the “Spirit of ACD”, as well as its values;

**OBSERVING** that 2022 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ACD, which had been commemorated with significant progress and achievements;

**RECOGNIZING** the significance in the achievement of the ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 as our aspiration and vision for pan-Asian cooperation in 2030 and the future creation of an Asian community;

**EMPHASIZING** the importance of implementing the ACD Blueprint 2021-2030 in the achievement of ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 and the fulfillment of the overall commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that the Governments of the Member States, through their extraordinary measures, could successfully address the COVID-19 pandemic in saving lives and protect livelihoods, and recognizing the efforts of the Member States in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its adverse impact as well as appreciating them for sharing of knowledge and expertise in addressing the pandemic;

**FOLLOWING** on the first meeting of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of ACD Member States to identify future cooperation, including the post-COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery and facilitating supply-chain resilience;

**ACKNOWLEDGING with appreciation** the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain to host the meeting of Secretaries General of Regional and Sub-regional Organizations and Forums in Asia;

**EXPRESSING FURTHER APPRECIATION** to the State of Kuwait for its continued support to the ACD Secretariat and to the Secretary General and the Secretariat staff for their professionalism and continuing commitment;

**DO HEREBY DECLARE TO:**

1. Share experiences and best practices on policy support measures as a response to the ongoing economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate an inclusive and sustainable recovery;
2. Ensure universal, timely and equitable access to safe, sustainable, effective, quality and affordable medical counter-measures for any future global health emergencies;
3. Promote the concept of sustainable recovery in post-pandemic healthcare, and noting in this regard the Concept Paper prepared by the Kingdom of Bahrain on “Post-Pandemic Sustainable Recovery in the Health Field”, and work towards regional cooperation, in accordance with national circumstances;
4. Build resilience of public health systems and primary healthcare, including by empowering healthcare workers and volunteers to tackle health emergencies through early response and preparedness, and to identify affordable and accessible local health services;
5. Consider the “One Health” Approach, which aims to achieve optimal health and well-being outcomes through recognizing the interconnections between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment;
6. Encourage relevant Ministries of the Member States to meet and discuss combating, preventing and mitigating infectious diseases, including using “One Health” Approach, and explore integration of the modern method of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases in national healthcare delivery mechanism;

7. Explore the integration of safe and evidence-based traditional medicine in national healthcare delivery mechanisms, where applicable and as appropriate, depending on national priorities;
8. Strengthen the global health architecture as well as solidarity and collaboration to better prevent, detect, prepare for and respond to future health threats;
9. Promote digital health innovations and solutions to aid universal health coverage, improve healthcare service delivery, and for sustainable recovery in post-pandemic healthcare;
10. Emphasize the importance of an integrated healthcare system and as stated in the Ankara Declaration, adopted on 21 January 2021, encourage meetings of Public Health Ministries and other relevant agencies to share best practices, knowledge, skills and experiences in combating, preventing and mitigating infectious diseases, in particular COVID-19;
11. Enhance ACD Member States' pandemic preparedness for resilient and inclusive recovery and to ensure just and sustainable transitions, effectively guarding against present and future health, environmental and economic challenges with a special emphasis on the need and on the action to adapt to and mitigate climate change within the context of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC and in accordance with its principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances;

12. Accelerate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in enhancing the importance of international partnership and solidarity in ensuring inclusive global recovery and accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda, leaving no one behind;
13. Encourage sustainable, affordable, reliable, inclusive, and just energy transitions in the ACD region, to create job opportunities for economic recovery and mitigate and adapt to climate change by taking also into account national circumstances, existing and emerging technologies and development priorities;
14. Enhance cooperation in science, technology and innovation through capacity building and knowledge sharing including exploring the possibility of establishing a network of research and development centers;
15. Expedite the activities of the Working Groups tasked to implement the six pillars of ACD Blueprint 2021-2030, and to encourage Member States to play a leading role through their prime-movers and co-prime movers in chairing, organizing and hosting activities;
16. Enhance sustainable tourism facilitation among Member States, promote more direct flights and mutual visits, encourage discussions on national real-time payment systems, support tourism products diversification, market surveys and joint tourism promotion;

17. Facilitate the digitalization of supply chains between the Member States of the ACD for sustainable economic recovery after crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, consistent with each Member State's domestic laws, regulations, and policy;
18. Strengthen the capacity and engagement of the private sector, especially by facilitating MSMEs and start-ups' active participation in the global and regional economy, including relevant supply chains, supported by ACD Business Forum and respective Chambers of Commerce and Industries of the Member States;
19. Recall the Ankara Declaration on encouraging at least one university of each Member State to become a member of the ACD University Network (ACD-UN) to help address the challenges to human resources development and skills demand in the Post-Covid era. In this regard, Member States acknowledge with satisfaction the increasing interest of Member States' universities to join the ACD-UN;
20. Recall the decision of the Manama Declaration of 25 November 2013 in relation to the nomination of the ACD Tourism Capital, acknowledge the practice to determine the next ACD Tourism Capital; and welcome the announcement of the next Capital by the upcoming Chair;
21. Task the Senior Officials to expeditiously finalize the Guiding Principles for the Functioning of the ACD Secretariat and ACD's General Rules of Procedure for adoption at the Ministerial Meeting;

22. Encourage Member States to host activities to commemorate ACD Day in order to increase public awareness and enhance the profile and visibility of ACD;

23. Have the Chairmanship rotated from the region of South-East Asia, followed clockwise by the regions of South Asia, West Asia, Central Asia and East Asia. In this regard, assumption of the ACD Chair will be based on the principle of voluntarism. Should there be no candidate from a regional group, consideration of the Chairmanship shall be referred to the next grouping. To facilitate these procedures, the Secretary General will consult the respective groups at least three months prior to the completion of the incumbent chair's term and report to Member States on the potential candidate for the next Chairmanship. In this regard, the Ministers appreciated the efforts of the Secretary General in undertaking informal consultations which took place prior to the adoption of this Declaration.

We **EXPRESS APPRECIATION** to the Republic of Türkiye for the Chairmanship between September 2019 - November 2021, and to the Kingdom of Bahrain for the Chairmanship for the years 2021-2023, and welcome the Islamic Republic of Iran as incoming Chair.

We **THANK** the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain for hosting the 18th ACD Ministerial Meeting and look forward to the hosting of the 3rd ACD Summit by the State of Qatar in 2023.

Adopted at New York on the sidelines of the 78<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, on 20 September 2023.