



MEDIA RELEASE

18th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and the 20th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution

**3 September 2025
Langkawi, Malaysia**

1. The 18th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and the 20th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution were held on 3 September 2025, in Langkawi, Malaysia. The Meetings reaffirmed their commitments to strengthening coordinated regional efforts to addressing the environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development, in line with the theme of Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN Chairmanship: Inclusivity and Sustainability and the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Strategic Plan adopted by the 46th ASEAN Summit.

2. The Meetings commended Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN Chairmanship priorities to foster regional cooperation, among others, through 'Addressing Climate Change for Stewardship, Partnership, and Ownership'. The Meetings endorsed the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 30th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP30) for consideration of the 47th ASEAN Summit. The Meetings acknowledged Malaysia's initiative to establish Southeast Asia Alliance Negotiation Group (Group SEA) under the Global Climate Change Negotiation Process within the UNFCCC, welcomed further discussion and inputs from AMS. The Meetings looked forward to the convening of the first ASEAN Pavilion at the UNFCCC COP30 in November 2025, in Belém, Brazil, which will serve as a powerful demonstration of ASEAN's unwavering commitment to taking meaningful action on climate change. The Meetings acknowledged Malaysia's initiative to strengthen capacity and cooperation on carbon market and carbon pricing in the region, to contribute to ASEAN's climate goals.

3. The Meetings commended the signing by all ASEAN Member States on the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) based in Brunei Darussalam and the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACC THPC) based in Indonesia. The Meetings looked forward to each AMS initiating

the ratification process and the full establishment and operationalisation of the Centres.

4. The Meetings approved the designation of six (6) new ASEAN Heritage Parks, namely Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve, Bako National Park and Lambir Hills National Park of Malaysia; Pu Mat National Park, Dong Nai Culture and Nature Reserve and Xuan Thuy National Park of Viet Nam; as the 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, and 69th ASEAN Heritage Parks, respectively. The Meetings congratulated the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) on its upcoming 20th Anniversary as the regional centre of excellence for biodiversity conservation and appreciated the continued support in facilitating cooperation and coordination on biodiversity. Further, the Meetings also welcomed the new Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.

5. The Meetings commended the recipients of the 6th ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Award and the 5th Certificates of Recognition, recognising their achievements as inspiration for other cities to pursue more sustainable policies and practices. The ASEAN ESC Regional Seminar was held on 2-3 September 2025, which empowered ASEAN-awarded cities to exchange valuable experiences and insights on fostering environmentally sustainable cities, and to build their networks and potential collaboration between stakeholders in initiating sustainable cities in ASEAN.

6. The Meetings commended the progress in developing the Post-2025 ASEAN Strategic Plan on Environment (ASPEN) and the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP). The Meetings acknowledged that these Strategic Plans will serve as a robust guide for shaping policy direction, enhancing institutional governance, and monitoring ASEAN cooperation on environment and climate change. These plans also aim to enhance regional cooperation and coordination on emerging and cross-cutting issues such as plastic pollution, circular economy, blue and green economy, nature-based solutions, and air pollution, in alignment with the ASCC Strategic Plan for the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and global development agenda. The Meetings looked forward to collaboration and contribution from external partners for the development and implementation of the Strategic Plans.

7. The Meetings reaffirmed their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) and noted with appreciation the continued efforts of the Committee under the Conference of Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (COM) in implementing the Second Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (Haze-free Roadmap) 2023-2030 and the Second ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) 2023-2030. The Meetings underscored the significance of maintaining and promoting cooperation and collaboration within ASEAN and with external partners to support the ASEAN Investment Framework for Haze-free Sustainable Land Management to achieve the shared vision of a Transboundary Haze- Free ASEAN by 2030.

8. The Meetings noted the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre's (ASMC's) assessment that the overall hotspot count so far for the Mekong sub-region in 2025 was around 25% lower than the same period in 2024 during its traditional dry season between January 2025 and May 2025. The situation escalated during February – March 2025, and Alert Level 3 was issued on 17 March 2025, with widespread transboundary smoke haze observed to cover many parts of the sub-region. The overall hotspot count so far over the southern ASEAN region was around 10% higher in 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. After the start of its dry season on 12 June 2025, the Alert Level 2 was issued on 19 July 2025. Moderate transboundary smoke haze was observed to affect parts of the southern ASEAN region on a few days in July 2025. As wetter conditions developed, the Alert Level was downgraded to Level 1 on 12 Aug 2025. The Meetings noted that either El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral or La Niña conditions are expected in the coming months. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) status is expected to remain neutral during this period. There remains a risk of transboundary smoke haze occurrence in the southern ASEAN region during its dry season in 2025, as hotspots with smoke plumes can develop during prolonged drier conditions. In the Mekong sub-region, the near-normal to below-normal rainfall expected towards the end of the year may contribute to increased hotspot activity and heightened risk of transboundary haze. The Meetings also noted developments of burned area and seasonal outlook products, upgrades to the ASMC WMO Information System (WIS), and high-resolution regional climate projections via an online climate visualiser, as well as a regional capability-building programme that includes workshops on hotspot and haze assessment, climate data analysis and projections, as well as attachment programmes.

9. The Meeting noted, based on the Southeast Asia Fire Danger Rating System (SEA-FDRS) assessment, that there remains a risk of escalating hotspot activity which may contribute to transboundary haze should limited rainfall persist in the coming weeks. This situation may extend into September as the region continues to experience dry season conditions. The Meeting further acknowledged MET Malaysia's ongoing efforts to strengthen the operational capacity of the SEA-FDRS. These efforts include the deployment of additional Automated Auxiliary Weather Stations (AAWS) under the Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Malaysia (SMPEM GEF-IFAD) initiative, the proposed establishment of a backup FDRS system by 2027 to ensure service continuity, and a planned collaboration with the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) to develop long-term Fire Weather Index (FWI) projections for the region through 2100.

10. The Meetings noted the reports by the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution (MSC) and the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution in the Mekong Sub-Region (MSC Mekong) in reaffirming their commitment to address specific haze-related issues occurring in the respective regions. The Meetings congratulated the successful 26th MSC in Brunei Darussalam, in July 2025, and looked forward to the convening of the 14th MSC Mekong in Lao PDR, in November 2025, to prepare for the upcoming dry season.

11. The Meetings noted the continuing dialogues between ASEAN and partners on environment, climate change and cross-cutting environmental issues, at the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation, ASEAN-ROK Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, ASEAN-EU High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, ASEAN-US High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change, and the ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials' Meeting on the Environment, held on 30-31 July 2025, in Langkawi, Malaysia.

12. The Meetings met their counterparts from Japan, Plus Three countries (China, Japan, and Republic of Korea), and the European Union at the ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation, the ASEAN Plus Three Environment Ministers' Meeting, and the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change respectively, to review current activities and discuss future strategic cooperation on biodiversity, climate change, environmental education, environmental science and technology, environmentally sustainable cities, water resources and marine plastic debris, among others.

13. The Meetings welcomed the Joint Statement on the ASEAN-Japan Mutually Beneficial Partnership on Environment and Climate Change for Materializing New Growth and the expanded ASEAN-Japan Cooperation Initiative: Strategic Program for ASEAN Climate and Environment (SPACE).

14. The Meetings welcomed the ASEAN-EU Work Programme on Environment and Climate Change 2025-2026, as well as the progress of the development of the Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2030 and issued the Joint Press Statement on the first ASEAN-EU Ministerial Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change.

15. The Meetings agreed to meet again in Viet Nam, in 2026, for the 21st Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, and in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in 2027, for the 19th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and the 22nd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution.

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