



# AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail [australia@un.int](mailto:australia@un.int)

150 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 [www.australia-unsc.gov.au](http://www.australia-unsc.gov.au)

## **UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH-LEVEL OPEN DEBATE ON ENHANCING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

19 April 2021

### **Written Statement by H.E. The Hon. Mitch Fifield, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations**

Australia thanks Viet Nam for its leadership to promote cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and regional organisations – both at the UN Security Council and as immediate past Chair of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2020. Australia wishes to underline the importance of continuing and enhancing engagement between the UN and all regional organisations that play a key role in upholding the rules-based multilateral system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown, profoundly, the importance of international cooperation through the rules-based multilateral system. This shared crisis is a reminder that many problems are best solved or, indeed, can only be solved through cooperation.

Our multilateral institutions – global and regional – are experiencing strain from shifts in global power, technological disruption and complex security, health, and economic challenges. Australia is committed to working in and with multilateral institutions to ensure they are fit-for-purpose, effective, open and transparent and accountable to member states, and promote dialogue and cooperation that support rules, norms and standards that underpin our shared peace, stability and prosperity.

Australia is a country of the Indo-Pacific region. Southeast Asia is on our doorstep and sits at the heart of the Indo-Pacific – strategically, economically and diplomatically.

For over 50 years, ASEAN and ASEAN-led regional architecture have played a critical role facilitating dialogue on pressing regional challenges, creating habits of cooperation, and reinforcing rules and norms of behaviour and of free and open markets that support a peaceful, inclusive, resilient and prosperous region. The conclusion of the ASEAN-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2020, the worlds' largest free trade agreement, will support a stable, predictable economic environment for recovery of trade and investment in the Indo-Pacific and serves as just one example of ASEAN's leadership to support the rules-based multilateral system.

As ASEAN's longest-standing Dialogue Partner since 1974, and a Strategic Partner since 2014, Australia remains committed to enhancing dialogue and deepening practical cooperation with ASEAN. We warmly welcome the efforts of ASEAN and the UN to deepen cooperation and further strengthen the multilateral system through the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership, as articulated by ASEAN leaders and the UN Secretary-General at the ASEAN-UN Summit in November 2020.

Through the ASEAN-Australia Strategic Partnership, practical cooperation, and Australia's active engagement in ASEAN-led regional forums, including the East Asia Summit as our region's premier forum for leader-led discussion of strategic challenges, Australia stands ready to support enhanced ASEAN-UN cooperation.

Australia stands with ASEAN as it leads the regional response to the crisis in Myanmar. Australia is deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the country and condemns the violence being perpetrated against its people. We welcome ASEAN's plans to hold a leaders' meeting on Myanmar this week and hope this leads to a positive outcome for the people of Myanmar.