

# **NACT Working Group Meeting on Promoting People-to-People Exchanges between ASEAN and China through Cooperation in Culture**

Hosted by NACT China

16 May 2017

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Network of ASEAN-China Think-Tanks (NACT) Working Group Meeting on Promoting People-to-People Exchanges between ASEAN and China through Cooperation in Culture was held on 16 May 2017 in Guiyang, China. The meeting aimed to evaluate the achievements and challenges in cultural cooperation between ASEAN and China, explore how China can help with the building of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community and make policy recommendations for future collaborations. The list of participants to this meeting is at [Annex](#).

## **II. The Significance and Progress of Cultural Cooperation**

1. Cultural exchange is a bridge of communication between peoples of China and ASEAN countries. The cultural cooperation between the two sides has a long history. In thousands of years, two-way cultural communication has made its positive contribution to the development of respective civilization and lasting peace in the region. Since the establishment of the strategic partnership between China and ASEAN, all-round cultural cooperation has become a major component of bilateral relations. Cultural exchange enhances mutual understanding between the peoples and cultivate a “we feeling” in the region, which lays a foundation for the ASEAN-China Community of Common Destiny. The following points provide a snapshot of the progress achieved and future directions in ASEAN-China cultural cooperation:

2. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of the Member

Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cultural Cooperation was signed in August 2005. Since then, cooperation in culture between ASEAN and China has accelerated.

3. The first ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA) Plus China Meeting was held on 25 May 2012 in Singapore, which endorsed the Concept Paper of ASEAN Plus China Cooperation in Culture and Arts and Operational Guidelines of the AMCA Plus China and Senior Officials Meeting for Culture and Arts (SOMCA) Plus China.

4. The Plan of Action (POA) on ASEAN-China Cultural Cooperation (2014-2018) was adopted at the 2nd AMCA Plus China Meeting, held on 20 April 2014, in Hue City, Vietnam.

5. The 3rd AMCA Plus China Meeting was successfully held on 25 August 2016 in Brunei Darussalam, in which China stressed its commitment to implement the ASEAN-China action plan on cultural cooperation, a path welcomed by the AMCA.

6. The main areas of cooperation proposed in the POA are: (i) culture and arts exchange, (ii) cultural industry, (iii) protection and preservation of cultural heritage, (iv) library cooperation, (vi) public cultural services, (vii) research and development (vii) human resources development and training.

7. The year of 2014 was made "ASEAN-China Cultural Exchange Year" which saw many cultural activities being conducted throughout the year and gained tremendous success.

8. Moreover, China has hosted the annual ASEAN-China Cultural Forum for more than ten years. The event has served as one of the key activities that bind professionals, policy-makers and other stakeholders to advance the conversation on how to strengthen ASEAN-China cultural cooperation.

9. The ASEAN-China Center is an important promoter and practitioner, which has been implementing several projects and activities to promote people-to-people connectivity through culture and tourism, among others, in facilitating good-neighbor relationship, mutual trust and friendship between China and ASEAN.

10. An important opportunity for ASEAN-China cooperation in culture can be

explored in relation to China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative which will position ASEAN significantly in the link between Asia and Europe through infrastructure and industrial projects, and in doing so, boost trade, culture exchange and people-to-people connectivity between countries.

11. The ASEAN Community has been realized in 2015. The importance of building a Social-Cultural Community as one of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community has become increasingly prominent. The recently adopted *ASEAN Strategic Plan for Culture and Arts 2016-2025* is not only a blueprint for the future cultural development of ASEAN Community, but also indicates how China can better strengthen its cultural cooperation with ASEAN. In the course of its implementation, coordination can be made with the China's *Guidelines for National Cultural Reform and Construction during the 13th Five-Year Plan Period (2016-2020)*.

12. This Working Group meeting believes that a more powerful cultural link will further enhance political mutual trust among regional countries and find new incentives for a diamond decade of ASEAN-China relations.

### **III. Priority Issues and Policy Recommendations**

The Working Group meeting reiterated the importance of cultural cooperation in the development of ASEAN-China relations. With this focus in mind, this meeting made the following recommendations to further promote cultural cooperation at the Ten Plus One level:

1. stick to the principle of "cultural inclusiveness" and create mutual trust and respect in the process of cooperation.
2. focus on finding and developing cultural commonalities shared among ASEAN countries and China, rather than simply focusing on each individual country's cultural properties and trying to develop cultural cooperation based on these distinctive properties.
3. approach cultural cooperation more comprehensively and integrate it into other areas of cooperation such as tourism and education.

4. carry out cultural programs and activities through ASEAN in a multilateral manner by establishing and exploiting regional mechanisms, such as the SOMCA Plus China and other relative working group meetings.
5. make more efforts to translate high-level decisions to pragmatic initiatives in culture and reduce delay and deficit in implementation.
6. make good use of the special funds raised by all levels of government from both China and ASEAN sides, such as the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund (ACCF), to support cultural projects.
7. carry out people-oriented cultural exchange by recognizing that cultural exchange should start from grassroots and engaging wider stakeholders in the culture sector such as non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, festival organizers, professional associations and academia.
8. set up a task force that consists of representatives and experts appointed by ASEAN-China governments as soon as possible to study a new five-year plan of cultural cooperation in the post-2018 era.
9. conduct a more programmatic approach to cooperation projects where resources are maximized and project momentum is sustained over a number of years by narrowing the focal areas, such as (a) culture and arts exchange; (b) protection and preservation of cultural heritage; and (c) human resource development and training.
10. promote cultural exchange on the basis of economic development by integrating regional cultural and creative industries and make cultural enterprises play a leading role in cultural economy.
11. recognize that the movie industry has great potential to accelerate cultural exchange between China and ASEAN, encourage collaboration in movie production as well as technology transfer by utilizing the movie studios in ASEAN countries and tailor Chinese films to fit Southeast Asian culture.
12. share experiences in digital preservation of cultural heritages and encourage digital interactions between peoples of ASEAN and China by setting up a mega-data platform or an *ASEAN-China Cloud* as the information hub.
13. Use social media to make ASEAN-China culture appealing and exciting to the

younger generations.

14. organize the ASEAN-China Arts Exhibition and Competition Festival annually to promote traditional and contemporary arts of the region.

15. build ASEAN-China Culture Centers in ASEAN member states and China to serve as the premier places for cultural exchange between the two sides and platforms to introduce ASEAN culture to the world.

Drafted by NACT China in June 2017.

**NACT Working Group Meeting on Promoting  
People-to-People Exchanges between ASEAN and China  
through Cooperation in Culture**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

.....  
**ASEAN-China Centre**

Sun Jianhua

Deputy Director

Education, Culture and Tourism Division, ASEAN-China Centre

**ASEAN SECRETARIAT**

Nguyen Ky Anh

Director, Sustainable Development Directorate

ASCC Department

**CAMBODIA**

Charadine Pich

Assistant to the Executive Director in Charge of Research and Publication

Cambodia Institute for Cooperation and Peace

**INDONESIA**

Gabriel Lele

Senior Researcher

ASEAN Studies Center, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

Universitas Gadjah Mada

**LAO PDR**

Thieng Boupoua

Director General

Institute of Foreign Affairs

Khom Douangchantha

Deputy Director General

International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Information, Culture and  
Tourism

## **MALAYSIA**

Surya Kumar Subramaniam

Senior Principal Assistant Secretary

International Relations Division (Culture), Ministry of Tourism and Culture

## **MYANMAR**

U Kyaw Myaing

Senior Adviser

Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS)

## **THE PHILIPPINES**

Benjamin San Jose

Assistant Professor

Political Science Department, Ateneo de Manila University

## **SINGAPORE**

Hoang Thi Ha

Fellow and Lead Researcher

ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute

## **THAILAND**

Nikorn Rongbuttsri

Lecturer and Head of program of study

Mae Fah Luang University

## **VIETNAM**

Thuy-Minh Nguyen

Researcher, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies

Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam

## **CHINA**

Jiang Ruiping

Vice President, China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU)

Song Baoan  
Academician of Chinese Academy of Engineering  
Vice President, Guizhou University

Lu Jianren  
Professor, China-ASEAN Research Institute, Guangxi University

Wu Jiewei  
Vice Dean  
School of Foreign Languages, Peking University

Zhang Bin  
Associate Professor  
Culture and History Department, Guangxi Academy of Governance

Guo Yanjun  
Director, Institute of Asian Studies (IAS), CFAU

Yang Yue  
Associate Professor, CFAU

Li Fujian  
Research Fellow, IAS, CFAU

Li Tianhui  
Research Assistant, IAS, CFAU