

NACT MEMORANDUM NO.1

NETWORK OF ASEAN-China Think Tanks (NACT)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Network of ASEAN-China Think Tanks (NACT) reaffirms that amity between the peoples holds the key to improved state-to-state relations. People-to-people exchange has become an important component of the friendly cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China. Along with the broadening and deepening of ASEAN-China relations, people-to-people exchange has led to greater bonding among their two peoples, which will play a significant role in promoting mutual trust and strengthening the political ties between the two sides; thereby lending a new impetus to a diamond decade yet to come. However, challenges still exist in promoting people-to-people exchange between ASEAN and China. To further promote people-to-people exchange between the two sides, Member States of ASEAN and China should be committed to addressing emerging challenges to cement time-honored ASEAN-China friendship.

II. NACT ACTIVITIES IN 2017

In 2017, NACT organized three Working Groups (WG) Meetings on Cultural Cooperation (NACT China), Tourism Cooperation (NACT Laos), Education Cooperation (NACT Singapore). The detail appears in Annex. NACT wishes to acknowledge the respective NACT member institutions, participants and supporters for their highly valued efforts and contributions.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on three WG meetings in 2017, NACT respectfully submits recommendations for the ASEAN-China leaders' consideration in three areas:

1. Cultural Cooperation between ASEAN and China

- a) Adhere to the principle of “cultural inclusiveness” and further develop mutual trust and respect in the process of cooperation.
- b) Identify cultural commonalities shared by ASEAN and China to further promote cultural understanding, harmony, and cooperation.
- c) Utilize all available funding sources from ASEAN and China to support cultural projects.
- d) Develop people-oriented cultural exchange by recognizing that cultural exchange should start from the grassroots and should engage wider stakeholders in the culture sector.
- e) Recommend a review of existing five-year action plan on cultural cooperation between ASEAN and China (2014-2018), in view of reminding governments about the need for a new action plan (2019-2023).
- f) Encourage collaboration in movie production and technology transfer, including tailoring ASEAN films to fit Chinese culture and vice versa, and assisting ASEAN films in tapping into the Chinese market.
- g) Share experiences in digital preservation of cultural heritages and move towards the setting up of a mega-data platform or an ASEAN-China Cloud as the information hub to facilitate cultural exchanges.
- h) Take advantage of social media to make ASEAN and Chinese cultures appealing and exciting to young people.
- i) Build ASEAN-China Culture Centers in ASEAN Member States and China for cultural exchanges between the two sides and for introduction and promotion of ASEAN culture to a wider audience.

2. Tourism Cooperation between ASEAN and China

- a) Build solid foundations for Public-Private Partnership in response to the current needs in tourism promotion.
- b) Strengthen ASEAN-China land and sea connectivity to facilitate tourism.
- c) Explore various approaches for promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism, including community-based tourism under the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan.
- d) Upgrade the service quality and protect the welfare of visitors by strengthening regulations on tourism sectors.

- e) Jointly publish a guideline for tourists to encourage good manners.
- f) Increase the access to tourism training in the region to help tourism practitioners obtain certificates in accordance with harmonized regional standards.

3. Education Cooperation between ASEAN and China

- a) Create an ASEAN-China University Network (ACUN) by building on the existing ASEAN University Network (AUN).
- b) Establish an online education information sharing centre to facilitate both academic research as well as vocational education and training among ASEAN and China.
- c) Build stronger linkages between the Association of the China-ASEAN Education and Training Centres (an association comprising 30 Chinese educational institutions across China that was formed in 2015) and its counterparts in ASEAN, in the areas of research, training, and publications.
- d) Promote short term exchanges of high-school students between ASEAN and China especially in the less developed areas of these countries to facilitate a more inclusive perspective.
- e) Consider putting education cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) as people-to-people connectivity is a key thrust of these initiatives.
- f) Ensure that educational programmes/initiatives provided by China are accessible to a wider audience in ASEAN and vice versa.

IV. CONCLUSION

NACT deeply appreciates the consideration by ASEAN and China leaders of the recommendations in this Memorandum and welcomes the opportunities to further interact with the policy-makers on the contents. NACT pledges its continued support to build a much closer ASEAN-China community of shared future and looks forward to making greater contributions to the region as the year 2018 marks the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the China-ASEAN strategic partnership.