

NACT MEMORANDUM NO.2

NETWORK OF ASEAN-CHINA THINK-TANKS (NACT)

June 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

The Network of ASEAN-China Think-tanks (NACT) held the 6th NACT Country Coordinators Meeting (CCM) and the 6th NEAT Annual Conference (AC) in Bangkok, Thailand on 13th-14th June 2019. The participants were from ASEAN member states and China. There were 22 participants attending the 6th NACT CCM on 13 June 2019 and 46 participants attending the 6th NACT AC on 14 June 2019.

NACT reaffirms the goal of promoting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development regionally and globally. It includes, but not limit to sustainable energy development, sustainable infrastructure and connectivity, or the green economy and inclusive growth. In addition, NACT supports ASEAN-China partnership to forge a closer community with a shared and sustainable future and wider areas of cooperation.

II. NACT ACTIVITIES IN 2019

In 2019, NACT organized three Working Group (WG) Meetings on 1) Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Energy Development (hosted by NACT Vietnam), 2) Regional Connectivity and Sustainability (hosted by NACT Malaysia) and 3) Environment Protection in ASEAN and China (hosted by NACT Singapore). NACT wishes to acknowledge the respective NACT member institutions, participants and supporters for their highly valued efforts and contributions.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on NACT activities in 2019, NACT respectfully submits recommendations for the ASEAN-China leaders' consideration in three areas:

1. Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Energy Development

- 1) Facilitate renewable energy development by sharing experiences and lessons learned and strengthening capacity building to improve the regional competitive advantages.
- 2) Improve technology transfer to enhance efficiency in energy supply and demand, especially renewable energy technology.
- 3) Harmonize financial and legal framework to facilitate energy trade and sustainable energy investment, improve the tariff system and create favorable market conditions for energy development.
- 4) Develop regional grid network from the current cross-border grid.
- 5) Cooperate in developing and exploiting alternative options such as biomass gasification and hydrogen gas.

2. Regional Connectivity and Sustainability

- 1) Make an overall plan on regional connectivity between ASEAN and China with details in priorities, sequencing and links between the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025).
- 2) Enhance coordination and regulation of existing institutions in the region such as China-ASEAN Connectivity Cooperation Committee and the Infrastructure Asia to ensure smooth alignment between the BRI and MPAC 2025.

- 3) Uphold the principle of sustainable connectivity in the projects between ASEAN and China by creating jobs, transferring technology to local experts, training local workers, meeting environmental protection requirements, using modern technology, and respecting the planned schedules to create environmental and social sustainability beneficial to both sides.
- 4) Involve local communities in the planning and construction of regional connectivity projects, ensure the interest of local communities, respect and value the local culture, and create beneficial development for local people.
- 5) Set up ASEAN-China Press Survey and Release Group so as to regularly report progresses of the existing regional connectivity projects based on the field investigation and survey, given the important role played by public opinion and media coverage in the cooperation between ASEAN and China.
- 6) Set up Connectivity and Economic Centers in ASEAN and China to look after matters such as productivity, competition, market opportunities as well as transport and logistics costs in order to maximize economic benefits of regional connectivity projects.
- 7) Carry out further cooperation in dealing with the challenges that regional connectivity projects might generate, such as trans-boundary crimes, transferable diseases and the loss of cultural identities.
- 8) Establish commercial dispute resolution mechanisms between ASEAN and China.

3. Environment Protection in ASEAN and China

- 1) Forge an ASEAN-China community of environmental protection & cooperation regionally and globally.

- 2) Share the information, expertise, technology and resources of the better-endowed states and societies to promote regional environmental protection and cooperation in recognition of development gaps between countries.
- 3) Develop a comprehensive training by ASEAN and China for “10+1” environment management personnel to enhance their capability in policy formulation and implementation of environmental protection.
- 4) Cooperate to enhance public education and participation in environmental protection in ASEAN and China.
- 5) Recruit youths from ASEAN and China for activities sponsored by the ASEAN-China Green Envoys program, in order to boost cooperation network among regional youths for greater public participation and heightened awareness.
- 6) Encourage the use of biodegradable plastics as an alternative and to phase out single-use plastics.
- 7) Jointly present annual awards to cities, towns and villages that are most environmentally friendly in ASEAN and China. The awards are a recognition of and encouragement to local governments, enterprises and citizens for being environmental role models.
- 8) Support the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) initiative by engaging efforts with other smart/green Chinese cities.
- 9) Study the sustainability and practicability of adopting a common environmental standard in the future for an ASEAN-China community of environmental protection and cooperation.

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.