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# Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

## ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

Friday 29 May 2020

# EVENT TRANSCRIPT

**Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020**  
**ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Opening Remarks:**

- **H.E. Noel Eugene Eusebio Servigon**  
*Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN*

**Closing Remarks:**

- **Dr. Dino Patti Djalal**  
*Founder of Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI)*

**Keynote Speakers:**

- **H.E. Kung Phoak**  
*Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community*
- **H.E. Deng Xijun**  
*Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Mission to ASEAN*
- **H.E. Jose Antonio Morato Tavares**  
*Director General of ASEAN Cooperation, Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

**Moderator:**

- **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar**  
*Co-founder of FPCI & Research Professor at Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI)*

**Discussants:**

- **Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood**  
*Special Advisor to the PM of Malaysia on Public Health & Former USG at IFRC in Geneva.*
- **Dr. N. Paranietharan**  
*WHO Country Representative to Indonesia*
- **Dr. Dinna Prapto Raharja**  
*FPCI's China Policy Group (CPG)*
- **Lydia Ruddy**  
*Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)*
- **Dato Abdul Majit Ahmad Khan**  
*Adjunct Professor, Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Malaysia*
- **Dr. Jayant Menon**  
*Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS, Singapore*
- **Dr. Vannarith Chheang**  
*President of the Asian Vision Institute (AVI), Chairman of the Advisory Council of the National Assembly of Cambodia*

**Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020**  
**ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- **Dr. Henry Chan**  
*Visiting Senior Research Fellow Cambodia Institute for Cooperation & Peace*
- **Irene Chan**  
*Associate Research Fellow, Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) NTU, Singapore*
- **Dr. ZHANG Jie**  
*Research Fellow, Head of Security and Foreign Affairs Department, National Institute of International Strategy, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)*
- **YANG Yue**  
*Associate Professor and Deputy Director, Institute of Asian Studies, China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU)*
- **Dr. TANG Qifang**  
*Associate Research Fellow, Department for International and Strategic Studies, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)*
- **Dr. Dafri Agus Salim**  
*Director of ASEAN Study Center, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta*
- **Dr. Shofwan Al-Banna**  
*FPCI's China Policy Group*
- **Hadi Kuntjara, Ph.D**  
*Executive Director of The Habibie Center*

**OPENING REMARKS**

**H.E. Noel Eugene Eusebio Servigon:**

- Today we are making history as this is the first ever Jakarta Forum held virtually since its inaugural session in March 2019. As we all can attest, the coronavirus pandemic has forced us to quickly innovate and interact in new ways, but while our medium is different today the principles that guide ASEAN-China dialogue relations remain the same; solidarity, friendship, and cooperation especially during difficult times. No other topic is more relevant today than how we can bond together to emerge victorious over a microscopic threat that has posed enormous consequences for our region and for the world.
- Early in January, we see the mobilization of existing mechanisms and platforms of the ASEAN health sector together with senior officials of the ASEAN+3 to share critical technical information. This was followed by the meeting of the ASEAN+3 health ministers on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- On February 20<sup>th</sup>, the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN and China met in Vientiane where they outlined the ways to step up cooperation through the exchange of best practices to actively combat COVID-19 in various areas such as prevention and control, diagnosis, treatment, and surveillance as well as on risk communication community engagement. Our foreign ministers also underscore the need to strengthen cooperation. We need ASEAN-led mechanisms and with external partners to comprehensively address the pandemic. We also make a commitment to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the economic and social development of all affected countries.
- On April 14<sup>th</sup>, the Special ASEAN+3 Summit on COVID-19 was held via videoconference. The summit resolved among others, to strengthen the early warning system in the region for pandemics, to enhance the national and regional capacities and to consider the setting up of a reserve of essential medical supplies. These proposals are all aligned with our collective aspiration to effectively respond to current and future challenges.
- All these special videoconferences emphasize that to effectively address this pandemic, requires a full of ASEAN community approach. The spirit cooperation to combat COVID-19 which began early this year continues today with this forum.

#### **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar:**

- Today we are going to have a lively discussion about the ASEAN-China cooperation on how we can overcome and mitigate the various impacts of COVID-19. Many countries have suffered from lockdown, large scale social restrictions which clearly have impacts on not just the public health sector but also on the social economy. We have to brace to meet the challenge while we talk about the need for cooperation we also realize that in overcoming the pandemic, each country has been forced to meet the challenges through their own resources because the lifeline of globalization and international cooperation have been disrupted not to mention transportation, trade, tourism, normal social life have also been disrupted. Thus, how can we overcome this and in what way can we develop both cooperation and at the same time mitigate the spread of the virus in the long term while strengthening our individual national resources?

**KEYNOTE SPEECHES**

**H.E. Kung Phoak:**

- Based on the situation report of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Center (ABVC) issued on May 28, 2020 there are currently more than 84,000 confirmed cases and 2,600 deaths reported in ASEAN. The epidemic situation in China has improved in spite of its more than 84,500 cases and 4,600 deaths.
- Given the ASEAN's central and important role in global movement of trade, travel, social changes, and health -related initiative, the impact of this pandemic has certainly caused havoc that is incomparable to what we have experienced so far in this century. Therefore, it is timely that we have this forum at this period of the pandemic wherein countries and regions globally are in different phases of responses to the impacts of COVID-19.
- On February 20, the COVID-19 outbreak was declared by the WHO as a Public Health Emergency of Global Concern and there were only six ASEAN member states that have confirmed cases at that time. However, with the span of three months, this unprecedented crisis rapidly evolved, COVID-19 has been declared as a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11. Now there are no single ASEAN member states which have been spared from this pandemic.
- Similar to the situation in China, other regions and other countries globally, the pandemic has severely impacted ASEAN member states public health and their economies especially in their trade, services, tourism, and travel sector. ASEAN has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in a timely and cohesive manner by undertaking measures at the bilateral and regional level to sustain a healthy, resilient, and united ASEAN community.
- This timely response was also made possible with the strengthened cooperation of ASEAN and China in addressing the multifactorial and multi sectoral effects of this pandemic in the region. The ASEAN health sector at national and regional level, responded immediately to the outbreak as early as the first week of January 2020 when China shared the first report of the cluster of pneumonia cases due to this novel coronavirus to the ASEAN Secretariat. The ASEAN health sector responded through its public health emergency mechanism by mobilizing the ASEAN Emergency Operation Center Network for public health emergencies, ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Center (ABVC) for big data analytics visualisation, ASEAN risk assessment and risk communication centers and the network of regional public health laboratory disease surveillance and health expert on communicable diseases. The ASEAN-China cooperation platforms and mechanisms for sharing timely and transparent information and technical changes will likewise mobilize and sustain until this day.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Following the participation of China has focal points at the Special ASEAN+3 Summit and following the ASEAN-China Foreign Minister special meeting on COVID-19, China has provided regional and bilateral support to several ASEAN member states, this includes among others the regular sharing of technical information, guidelines, and protocols for the detection and treatment of COVID-19. The provision of medical supplies such as protective personal equipment and test kits and technical exchanges among health experts. This type of cooperation provided through the China health colleagues have been valuably utilized by health counterparts in ASEAN.
- At the high level within the ASEAN health sector, the China health sector supported the commitment in the joint statement on enhancing the cooperation in COVID-19 response, together with health ministers from other plus three countries and ASEAN member states on 7th April 2020.
- As COVID-19 comes to cease our regional agenda, our leaders have reaffirmed the commitment in the fight against COVID-19 and in strengthening the coordination of national and regional efforts in ensuring ASEAN readiness and responsive measures to mitigate and eliminate the threats of COVID-19. To follow up on this commitment, the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) agreed to set up the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergency (ACCWG-PHE) subsequently on 31st March 2020. The ACCWG-PHE meeting led by the senior official meeting chair involved a relevant sectoral body from across three pillars including the sectors of health, foreign affairs, information, defence, immigration, and finance. A set of recommendations were put up to mitigate the far-reaching adverse impacts of COVID-19 in all aspects of life and later approved by the ACC.
- At the Special ASEAN+3 Summit on COVID-19 on 14th April 2020, the Chinese leader together with the rest of the leaders of ASEAN and other +3 countries reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen solidarity, enhance cooperation in mutual support among the ASEAN+3 countries to control and contain the spread of the pandemic and address its adverse impacts on our societies and economies. ASEAN response to the pandemic can only be more effective if done in partnership with relevant sectors within ASEAN and with the development and dialogue partner that is China. With regard to the ASEAN-China cooperation with the further commitment announced by Premier Li Keqiang to support ASEAN initiative on regional response fund and other health-related engagement on COVID-19.
- In the context of the global support of China to address COVID-19, ASEAN region has certainly benefited from China's strong steps in supporting key areas in prevention, quarantine, detection, treatment, tracing, and research development on vaccines, increasing political and financial support to the WHO and other regional health institutions and agencies, supporting countries in region resource-poor settings and strengthening solidarity in mitigating the impact of this pandemic in the context of addressing ways of preventing complex disasters from happening again in the future.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- It is heartwarming that in this difficult time we have been able to showcase our spirit of solidarity and be part of the global effort in navigating this crisis. Guided by our leaders, ASEAN will tackle the challenges collectively to limit the loss of life, productivity, and livelihood, support post-pandemic recovery efforts especially in the most affected sectors such as health and trade, and strengthen supply chain resilience against future shock. ASEAN looks forward to sustaining this objective in collaboration with China and other external partners.

#### **H.E. Deng Xijun:**

- As close neighbors connected by mountains and rivers, China and ASEAN countries enjoy the fine tradition of mutual assistance in times of difficulties. Since the beginning of our dialogue relations in 1991, we have worked together to turn the tide over major crises, such as the Asian and international financial crises, the SARS and avian influenza. We have offered each other enormous help and support in devastating natural disasters, such as the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Wenchuan Earthquake. Each crisis has led to closer ties and stronger cooperation between us and demonstrated our extraordinary friendship and deep mutual trust. Our valuable experience of jointly tackling crises and mechanisms for enhancing emergency preparedness have drawn us closer to each other as neighbors and partners.
- As a common challenge once again reveals the interconnectedness of China and ASEAN, in response our two sides have extended each other mutual support and conducted close cooperation. Our solidarity and coordination are moving us towards a stronger China-ASEAN community with a shared future.
- In this regard, I wish to highlight some of our collective endeavors: First, policy and technology communication has been intensified. President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi talked frequently over phone with their ASEAN counterparts. The health authorities of both sides have maintained hotline exchanges of the latest developments and information. In addition to China's publicly released protocols of diagnosis, treatment and control, Chinese health experts have also shared first-hand experience with their ASEAN colleagues through a dozen of video meetings. China has also sent eight medical expert teams to Cambodia, the Lao PDR, the Philippines, Myanmar and Malaysia and helped the Philippines and Myanmar set up testing labs to enhance the response capability of ASEAN.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Second, mutual assistance has been extended when they are most needed. Ever since China's first reported case to the WHO, ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Secretariat have been standing side by side with China. The government and the people of ASEAN countries extended sympathies and assistance to China. The grateful Chinese people take this heartwarming and precious support to heart. After the virus hit ASEAN, the Chinese central local government, the military, the business community, and the private entities responded with no delay to reciprocate acts of friendship and kindness from ASEAN. The urgently needed medical supplies have since been flowing uninterruptedly from China to ASEAN countries. Our mutual timely assistance and support have given each other strength and confidence to fight and win the battle.
- Third, consensus among countries in the region has been pooled and the anti-pandemic efforts better coordinated. China supports the ASEAN-centered mechanisms in playing an active role in protecting regional public health security through cooperation. In February, the ASEAN-China Special Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 was held. Close communication and coordination have maintained under the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) mechanism. The APT Health Senior Officials' Meeting, Health Ministers' Meeting and a Special Summit were prepared and convened with no delay, setting an example of anti-pandemic cooperation for the world. Our leaders reached important consensus at the Special APT Summit that strengthened the determination and confidence of regional countries to defeat the virus with a collective response and revitalize the regional economy.
- Fourth, business ties have been tightened. China-ASEAN trade remains resilient despite the COVID-19. China General Administration of Customs reported a 6.1 percent growth of China-ASEAN trade in goods in the first quarter of 2020 to exceed US\$140 billion, making ASEAN China's largest trading partner for the first time. The Belt and Road projects in ASEAN countries are advancing steadily, with major progress in the China-Laos Railway, the Jakarta-Bandung High-speed Rail, the East Coast Rail Link in Malaysia and the Hengyi petrochemical project in Brunei. As a key part of our regional anti-pandemic cooperation, stronger China-ASEAN economic ties have stabilized the economy and protected the industrial and supply chains of the region.
- Confronted by the unexpected pandemic, the Chinese government has taken the most comprehensive, stringent and thorough measures of prevention and control. It has followed the people-centered principle and taken a science-based and targeted approach. China has acted with openness, transparency and responsibility to provide information to WHO and relevant countries in a most timely fashion. We have released the genome sequence at the earliest possible time and shared control and treatment experience with the world without reservation. We have provided countries in need with meaningful support and assistance. What China did has proved to be effective, and our opposition to labeling, stigmatization and politicization of the virus has been widely acclaimed by the international community. A fair and just evaluation of China's anti-pandemic efforts will eventually emerge from history.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- After making painstaking efforts and enormous sacrifice, China has made major strategic progress and is one of the first countries to bring the pandemic under control. China's restoration of economic and social development has greatly eased the global shortage of medical supplies and will contribute to the recovery of global economy at an early date. At the "Two Sessions", the two big conferences of China just concluded days ago, many important decisions were made, which wouldn't have been possible without China's successful anti-pandemic efforts. Going forward, China will work on an ongoing basis to contain the virus and forestall a resurgence of infection and, in the meantime, reopen businesses at a faster pace. China will step up international coordination and cooperation to stabilize global industrial and supply chains and restore growth in the world economy.
- China is also happy to see that the control measures in ASEAN are producing good results, and that ASEAN has turned out to be in a better shape than other regions in the world. This is attributable to the hard work of ASEAN governments and people. China commends the governments of ASEAN countries for implementing timely, stringent control measures and economic stimulus policies. We also appreciate the leadership of Vietnam as ASEAN Chair for strengthening ASEAN unity and coordination against COVID-19. Recently, the situation in ASEAN countries is better off on the whole, with rising recovery rates and no new transmissions for days in nearly half of its member states. This improvement has laid a solid foundation for the gradual resumption of economic and social development in ASEAN.
- As the virus is still raging, the global fight against COVID-19 is at a critical moment. As President Xi Jinping proposed at the opening of the World Health Assembly recently, we must defeat the virus through solidarity and cooperation, protect the life and health of people in all countries, safeguard Planet Earth, our common home and build a global community of health for all. China is ready to further strengthen coordination and cooperation with ASEAN, achieve the final victory and global recovery and build a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future.
- To this end, I wish to make the following proposals: first, we need to enhance joint prevention and control to curb the spread of the virus in the region. We must strengthen coordination between our competent authorities so that they could better share information, exchange control measures, treatment experience and research outcomes in a timelier fashion and conduct joint research and development of drugs and vaccines. We also need to have more dialogues and cooperation in health by summing up experience and addressing deficiencies. China will continue to do everything in its power to support and assist ASEAN in light of ASEAN's needs.
- Second, in view of longer-term needs, we need to put in place more cooperation mechanisms. We must strengthen institution-building in public health, such as the ASEAN-China public health emergency liaison mechanism, the ASEAN-China and ASEAN Plus Three reserves of essential medical supplies as well as tabletop exercises for public health emergencies. We need to make better use of ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund to finance more health projects and train more emergency response professionals in public health.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Third, we need to uphold multilateralism and improve global public health governance. It's important to strengthen the UN-centered governance system for public health security, enhance coordination and cooperation with WHO and increase political and financial support for WHO so that it could play a bigger role in leading global efforts against COVID-19. Since the outbreak, China has donated a total of US\$50 million and enormous supplies to WHO. China will also work with the UN to set up a global humanitarian response depot and hub in China. President Xi committed at the World Health Assembly US\$2 billion over two years to help with COVID-19 response and with economic and social development in affected countries. ASEAN countries are of course to benefit.
- Fourth, we need to enhance policy coordination to restore growth to the region. We must jointly take necessary measures to stabilize the global industrial and supply chains, conclude RCEP by the end of this year and bring East Asia back to the growth track. With all the necessary control measures in place, we should consider opening a "fast-track lane" for essential personnel on urgent visits in the areas of commerce, logistics, production and technological services. China has implemented this arrangement with the ROK and is discussing this idea with Singapore bilaterally. In view of the post-pandemic era, we must advance cooperation in e-commerce, health and medical care, smart manufacturing, big data, and 5G to foster new drivers of growth. In view of the post-pandemic era, we must advance cooperation in e-commerce, health and medical care, smart manufacturing, big data, and 5G to foster new drivers of growth.
- To conclude, I'm convinced that with the strong leadership of Chinese and ASEAN leaders, with the solidarity and cooperation among countries in our region, we will prevail over the virus as early as possible. As State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi put in at his press conference a few days ago, rainbow will appear after a storm. China will continue to view ASEAN as a high priority in its neighborhood diplomacy and support ASEAN centrality in East Asia cooperation. China is ready to move our relations forward in the spirit of mutual trust, mutual accommodation, mutual benefit and mutual assistance.
- Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue relations. We believe with the maturity and confidence our relationship has gained in the past three decades, China and ASEAN will take more solid steps forward in forging a closer community with a shared future. Let's make concerted efforts to deepen cooperation against the pandemic. Let's build a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future. Let's take China-ASEAN relations to new heights!

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

#### H.E. Jose Antonio Morato Tavares:

- The ASEAN and China have a strong cooperation, strong engagement to jointly address the COVID-19 pandemic. ASEAN member states are collaborating, assisting one another in the provision of essential medical supplies and equipment. We have committed to ease the regulations for those essential supplies and we should gradually continue the flows of those essential goods. Mutual assistance to ASEAN nationals in ASEAN region including the migrant workers. In the context of ASEAN+3, we have the ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve where right now we have 778,000 tons of rice stored, ready to be used in times of need. There is also the Chiang Mai Initiative which has 250 billion USD, ready to assist member states in any case it is needed.
- ASEAN also, as a result of our engagement with China and ASEAN+3 countries, and other dialogue partners, is in the process of establishing a regional reserve for medical supplies, finalizing the establishment of COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, establishing an ASEAN Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The regional reserve for medical supplies includes a warehouse to be managed by the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance. ASEAN is mobilizing collaboration support from partners around the world where hotline communication mode health experts sharing best practises.
- The European Union is also offering support to ASEAN with 350 million euros. Japan is also supporting the establishment of ASEAN Center for Diseases and Prevention Control. The ASEAN+3 countries are supporting the establishment of ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund
- We are exploring the possibility of joint production in medicines, and vaccines once it is found. Indonesia is also ready in this joint production, in order to have this production of medicines and vaccines massively so that it can be affordable and accessible for all citizens in our region and beyond.
- Indonesia alone, has gathered about 111 supports, this includes from governments, 88 non-governmental organizations, and 12 international organizations. The Foreign Minister of Indonesia has been very active in mobilizing these global collaborations. For Indonesia alone, there is actually a support of around 100 million USD.
- There are possible scenarios, the way I see it forward. One possible scenario is the best-case scenario where scientists will find the vaccines or medicine this year in a few months time, that will hopefully be accessible to all countries. Thus, the pandemic will be put under control. However, even if we have this best scenario, how fast will we recover? It will depend on how fast the workers are being re-employed, how rapidly can consumption and demand return, then investment will again pick up. The question is how 'normal' it will be under this best scenario? Some say that it will never be the same again even if the vaccine is found because although if the vaccine will be found in a few months this year it will take months or even years to produce it massively.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- The second scenario that I see is the worst scenario where there is no vaccine or medicine found until next year and there can be a second or third wave of infection. Then countries will continue to undertake massive testing, those who are infected will be put under quarantine, they have to apply stricter protocols and social distancing. When will the economy recover depends on how fast we are going to put under control this coronavirus.
- I predict that in the future, not only for the ASEAN region, we are moving towards a more digital society with virtual meetings, more teleconferences, many will continue working from home, applying a more flexible working space and time system. In ASEAN, I think this kind of situation will push towards a digital economy where e-commerce will be further expanded.

#### **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar:**

- On the notes that we are going to become a less social being, and more digital being, the 'new normal' will probably not be in the best scenario or worst scenario but in the middle where there might be a transformation of our society and economy and there will be 'winners' and 'losers' in this.

### **MODERATED DISCUSSION**

#### **Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood:**

- The first thing I would say is that ASEAN has an amazing opportunity and is well-placed to be a fantastic convening power and we have seen this in many situations. China has been very generous in its relationships with many of the ASEAN member states including with Malaysia. I would like to take the goodwill further, how do we turn the goodwill of the ASEAN+3 discussion further into very pragmatic steps on how we move forward? First, we have to learn to live with COVID-19. Until the vaccine is found, we have to have a complete mindset shift on how we live and work.
- In terms of pragmatically moving forward with all the goodwill, I do not think we should reinvent the wheel, what would be good is to see how we build on existing mechanisms as ASEAN already has, which has been working well, particularly around disaster management. Managing the pandemic in terms of response, recovery, data management, visualization, analysis, and also preparedness is very similar whether you are managing a cyclone, or whether you are managing a pandemic. This is an opportunity to look at what tools are readily available, for example the disaster logistics hub that ASEAN has, is a really good starting point to ensure that logistic supplies are there for distribution in ASEAN. I know this has happened sporadically but perhaps this should be systematized. In other words, I am calling for a much more system approach to looking at management of pandemics, because we know that this is not going to be the last one.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- The second thing I would say is how do you strengthen the research that is going on. The WHO, as we all are aware, is doing a lot more collaborative research as well as looking for a vaccine. China has done some quiet work in vaccine research and has moved to stage 2 in some of the vaccine trials. How does ASEAN as a bloc form a much stronger negotiating power bloc in terms of access to vaccines because we all know when the vaccine is available, there will be competition on who gets the vaccine? It is extremely important that everyone has access to vaccines and I think ASEAN as a bloc can actually do that to really weigh in, on access to vaccines.
- The third I would say is that it strengthens your civil society. The Chinese Red Cross has been very critical in sharing best practices with many Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world including the Italian Red Cross. I think we also have to learn from the civil society in China that has worked quite closely and the Red Cross being a statutory body. This is one good example of how you can actually bring community learning and community engagement at all levels in ASEAN.
- It is also significant that we address the sticky issues namely the refugees coming in to our borders. This is a difficult catch-22 situation for many governments because there is a protection of their borders on one hand and then there is a humanitarian crisis on the other hand. ASEAN needs to convene and discuss how does it manage not just refugees but also undocumented migrants who all need to have some access to health care and rights to be protected. The long-term solution is also needed to be discussed.
- How do we learn from this pandemic? How do we build in anticipation and forecasting in the future so that the systems that we have to develop within ASEAN as a membership organization as well as individual countries can be improved?

#### **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar:**

- In many cases, the challenges are both economic and religious. For the economic side, those who have lost their jobs and those who do not have regular income feel that they have no choice, other than to die from the virus or to die from starvation. Then, the religious side because of their faith they want to congregate in their respective place of worship.
- Indonesia is a case where as a democratic country during Ramadan where people want to travel in order to meet their families and relatives, no matter how strong the enforcement, it is very difficult to prevent people from going to worship places and from doing mass exodus.

#### **Dr. N. Paranietharan:**

- One thing I want to say at the outset is that I think it is not about what we are learning for the next pandemic, but what we are learning for this pandemic. This is only the beginning and we still have a long way to go. We are building the ship as we sail and that is a very unique feature in this whole pandemic response globally.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- When we talk about ASEAN cooperation, I want to take it to the next level. One of the problems that we face in this pandemic is that normally any natural disaster such as a tsunami only affects a few countries and we manage to bring surge and additional capacity from other parts of the world and manage to form an appropriate response. This pandemic now almost affects all countries, there is little surge capacity available from one country to go and support another country, therefore countries are struggling with that.
- In this pandemic, one country may have a transmission going up and another country may have flattened the curve. During those intervals, countries that have managed it well faced with other countries that are struggling with the overwhelming load and could not manage the laboratory capacity or the testing capacity, can one country consider sending its laboratory personnel and system to another country for a few months and help them manage it, especially countries among the ASEAN and ASEAN+3? Specific reasons why I chose laboratory as an example is because laboratory testing is a fundamental cornerstone of the response for this pandemic and this is what a lot of countries are struggling with. Therefore, within ASEAN that might be a big help, of course all the other best practices, sharing information, and others will also help, in addition to that, think a bit specific of something like that.
- Or if a country has used a very good contact tracing app and maybe that can be exported to another country, I think it will be a fantastic area and a very real, timely help for other ASEAN countries or even ASEAN to other regions in the world.
- Today (29th May 2020) at 5 PM in Geneva time, the Costa Rica government and the WHO are launching a solidarity call to action. It is co-sponsored by a number of countries including Indonesia and Malaysia as two ASEAN countries. The basic idea is to launch a platform that will ensure any new therapeutics, diagnostics, or even vaccines, will be served as a global public goods. Thus it will be equitably shared for all people of all countries. Rather than competing who found the vaccine first, it will be about how we can make more of it quickly to be able to share it with everybody. It is an important initiative for everybody to work together, ASEAN and ASEAN+3 to work together to support so that we can reduce that tension that has created unhealthy conflicts among countries.
- I would like to be an optimist on a best-case scenario, Ambassador Jose Tavares earlier said that we will have a vaccine in a few months this year. Unfortunately, being a realist, I think it is going to take at least a year or more until we have a reliable vaccine. Therefore, we have to learn to live under this 'new normal' and as what Dr. Jemilah has advised us to follow all public health measures and social distancing measures to keep the spread under control until we have a proper treatment and a vaccine.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

#### **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar:**

- It is easy to talk about cooperation where at the end of the day during a crisis, a self-centered approach will prevail. When we talk about the current global pandemic, on one hand, it is global, therefore the only way forward is to work together because no single country will be able to deal with this on their own. However, on the other hand, when the pandemic first emerged, we had to shut our borders. Even in Indonesia we have to lock our provinces. In order to supply food and basic necessities you could not rely on even neighboring provinces. How we balance between developing national capacity or local capacity and cooperating under international cooperation is important.

#### **Dr. Dinna Prapto Raharja:**

- I would like to discuss the points made by Dr. Paranie, which is that no country has more capacity than others. I think that is very much true for the health sector but for the economic sector some countries have much higher capacities than others to cope with the economic difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The background of this was and still is the trade war between the US and China. If we look at the currency reserve of countries around the world, the US is still badly affected and China is relatively much better than others. In the short run, I think the US will still try to come after China's surplus in trade balance and this will somehow affect China's options on what to import. There has been indication that China can drop buying products from some countries and some countries are sent in sudden limbo because of this sudden change.
- My question to Ambassador Deng is what does China and ASEAN plan to do to mitigate the worst consequences of this on-going trade war? The limited buying capacity yet you still have to maintain this cooperation between us.
- Second question is about the global value chain. A lot of the manufacturing capacity in the world is now based in China or at least the assembling activity is in China. A lot of other countries especially in ASEAN rely on the service sector which is badly affected by the pandemic. We have not found the 'new normal' for this tourism, trade, people to people meeting. How do we ensure that manufacturing opportunities are also shared among these middle-income countries? ASEAN is among the best community purchasing power in the world, therefore we may not be qualified in the long run for global help in terms of economic help, but we do have the capacity to manufacture products.

#### **Dato Abdul Majit Ahmad Khan:**

- The pandemic has inflicted severe difficulties on our lives but I think this is an opportunity to re-examine existing framework cooperation mechanisms so that we can prepare for future shocks.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- The ASEAN-China cooperation has very good mechanisms in place but I think what we need is to make them more effective and more result-oriented. For example, in my opinion, the ASEAN-China cooperation fund is quite under-utilized, it needs to be picked up and the difficulties are on the ASEAN side as there are difficulties to reach consensus on projects proposed.
- Going forward, the priority for all governments is to balance life and livelihood. On the livelihood side, question of economic revival and how to promote growth in the future. In this context, perhaps ASEAN needs to strategize offers made by China on the various assistance either bilaterally or through regional outlets and also at the WHO.
- On the economic front, ASEAN should urgently seek how to facilitate processes of investment, trade, and tourism flows. China has started to propose fast-tracked lanes and some countries have taken up this. This is something that ASEAN as a group needs to do to facilitate and accelerate cooperation.
- Due to the pandemic, digital economy in the forms of e-commerce, telemedicine may become more prominent in the future and I think China has the lead on this. I think it is important that ASEAN and China explore various types of cooperation in this sector.

#### **YANG Yue:**

- First and foremost, what is urgent for ASEAN and China, for the time being is to enhance cooperation on safely re-opening, developing a new normal of coexistence with coronavirus. China has already re-opened but some ASEAN member states are preparing to re-open. We need to increase information, experience sharing, all measures and plans to safely re-open. For example, in China, we are now using health QR codes as a proof of a person's health status and I think it is helpful for tracing. Since countries need to increase their capabilities on testing and tracing, cooperation on this is essential.
- Governments and businesses in every country need to work together to guarantee the safe re-opening. For example, in China the government and the businesses, they discuss how to re-open with restaurants discussing how to set up the tables in a proper distance to guarantee the customers health.
- We can enhance cooperation in mitigating the negative impact of COVID-19 on the society and the economy. On the social aspect, poverty is a major issue because It is hard for countries with high poverty rates to implement strict self-quarantine since people living under or near the poverty line need to keep on working to survive. In China, COVID-19 has forced people to go back to poverty. One of the practises in China to lift people out of poverty is the assistance of e-commerce that is e-commerce assisted poverty reduction and it has been proved to be very effective during pandemic. Hopefully this can be applied to ASEAN countries too.

## **Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020**

### **ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- On the economic front, in my view, cooperation on digital technology and digital economy should be prioritized. Amid the pandemic in China, the digital economy played an important role in ensuring consumption and employment, also promoting resumption of production. The digital technology has also been applied in COVID-19 response such as tracing and long-distance diagnosis. I think on this, China and ASEAN have a broad common ground in terms of strategic development of digital technology and digital economy.
- We need to see this year as an opportunity, ASEAN-China digital economy cooperation to further strengthen our strategic integration on this and jointly promote the construction of Digital Silk Road. I think that will help us to mitigate negative economic impact especially when vaccines are currently not available so to prepare for the worst scenario. Furthermore, we need to work together on building digital infrastructure so as to bridge the digital divide in each respective country.

#### **H.E. Deng Xijun:**

- We should strengthen our coordination between our competent authorities so that they could share information, exchange and control measures, research and outcomes of the vaccines. During the World Health Assembly a few days ago, President Xin Jin Ping also announced that once COVID-19 vaccine in China is available, it will be used as a global public goods and this will be China's contribution to ensuring vaccine accessibility as well as accountability in developing countries.

#### **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar:**

- On the other side, people are still concerned with inequalities that will occur due to the expensive production of the vaccine and that developed countries are not going to share it with developing countries. But there is also some situation that we have to look after, mainly the US-China trade war which has impacted global public health as the United States has threatened to hold WHO's funding, how are we going to overcome this?

#### **H.E. Deng Xijun:**

- As for where we are and where we need to be in the US-China relation, our country is consistent and as the largest developing and developed country, China and the United States have shown great responsibilities for global peace and development. It is imperative for us to properly handle our relations out of the strong sense of responsibility, humanity, history and to our people.
- Both China and the US stand for cooperation, we have experienced the positive and negative lesson from this and we need to learn from it. China and the US have different social systems but this is the result from different choices made by two people and we need to respect the decisions being made. It is also true that there are disagreements but that does not mean it will reduce cooperation.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- China remains prepared to work with the US with or without conflict and confrontation, we uphold mutual respect in a win-win cooperation and we build relationships based on coordination, cooperation and stability. At the same time, we will also defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- In short, for the fundamental and long term interest, the Chinese and American people, also the wellbeing and the future of humanity, China and the US should find a way for a peaceful mutual cooperation. As both (China and the US) are important dialogue partners of ASEAN, we need to support the centrality of ASEAN as regional cooperation although there is some competition between both countries, we have also maintained the cooperation for some regional issues. China is willing to keep its dialogue with the US in supporting the ASEAN Community building and dealing with the common challenges with ASEAN.

#### **Dr. Jayant Menon:**

- What we need to understand is the three different levels of important response, the main response might be national and multilateral response. I would like to call for a revival of the ASEAN+3 as this group was born out of a crisis and it is designed to face a crisis and particularly well suited in this environment, it can help to coordinate the fiscal stimulus program in order to face long term challenges such as the economic fallout. Also regarding the undocumented migrant workers that has gained regional challenges such as creating massive outbreak and this will provide wider lens of what might be happening in countries with large amount of migrant workers.
- In singapore, there are massive testing for migrant workers but in some other developing countries, this has not occurred yet especially for the group of undocumented migrant workers. We need to be careful as there will be invisible explosions taking place in that community, we should come together in order to address this regional problem.

#### **Dr. Henry Chan:**

- If you look at the number of cases around the world, we have more than 100,000 new cases every day and that the center of the epidemic has shifted to the US. In the US, the cases have not dropped yet and it shows there are 20,000 new cases everyday. But if we look at the East Asian countries and European Countries, they have done so much better with all of the effort to tackle the global pandemic through closing the borders, mass testing and surveillance. But if the second wave is coming to us, it will affect the most on the economic side caused by closed borders that involve businesses such as the tourism and service sectors. My point is, China and other Asian countries should accelerate the flow of goods and we also need to reevaluate our best practices.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

#### **Lydia Ruddy:**

- Governments can work with chambers of commerce to engage the private sectors.
- China sent a message of support as the first country to work out common action plans with ASEAN, this led to the special ASEAN+3 summit in April where serious commitments were made. China was also the first country to support the COVID-19 rescue fund. Also, what has been mentioned before, China has supported some southeast countries by sending Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other equipment. It is important that we have to understand, no one is actually playing the “blame game”, this is crucial in terms of maintaining mutual trust. The operation resulted from those agreements being made is one of the main challenges as it will take long scale regional coordination and funding.
- We also need to maintain ASEAN centrality and neutrality, stable and transparent relationship between China and ASEAN, not only by providing solid bases for working together but also serve to increase trust between China and the middle power countries of the region including Australia and New Zealand. This relationship could boost stronger bonds for the benefit of all countries.
- Lastly is about the long-term recovery, ASEAN has been transformed into the socio-economic system and new industrial revolution with adaptation with new technology but when the pandemic first hit earlier this year, ASEAN was really concerned with supply shock caused by the immediate shortage of Chinese products. However, the implementation of large-scale social distancing across ASEAN member states, we now see another deeper crisis in terms of demand shock, this is the real challenge for ASEAN to move forward. To really comprehend about the regional economy, we must understand the role of the global value chain as it is crucial for production systems in the region. Thus, promoting and protecting the global value chain is imperative to move forward and growth and connectivity is key to protect the global value chain.

#### **Dr. Vannarith Chheang:**

- We have many statements to express our solidarity but if we look at the activity and action in the ground, it is more on the national level. When we mention solidarity, it means the action being done together. Regarding regional cooperation, I support the ASEAN+3 as it is the most effective way in responding to the crisis. ASEAN+3 has also great potential to work closely together to mobilize resources in order to mitigate the crisis.
- About the green lane that China has negotiated with some countries, it is possible for China to negotiate about this matter with ASEAN member states to boost the movement of critical practices across the region.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

#### **Dr. Zhang Jie:**

- My question is, how could ASEAN expand cooperation to other areas and other countries? Besides the ASEAN+3, who is the next priority partner, could it be Australia, New Zealand or South Asian countries?

#### **Irene Chan:**

- As mentioned earlier, China is still protecting its territory and sovereignty throughout the times. In the meantime, how can each and every one of us imagine the new normal as it will affect a country's territory and sovereignty, and what does the new normal mean? Or were there new normal for regional security, strategic compilation of power dynamics as well as influence?

#### **Dr. Dafri Agus Salim:**

- From my point of view, it seems that ASEAN as a regional organization is still struggling to face the COVID-19 issue. But the COVID-19 global pandemic is also a good reason for ASEAN to review its performance and learn to carry our better practices for regional cooperation. ASEAN member states have to understand the meaning of solidarity through better actions to deal with this kind of pandemic situation and also in the future.
- ASEAN could create a special body working on health matters, strengthening the ASEAN norms to face this kind of regional problems and focus on rapid recovery.

#### **Dr. Shofwan Al-banna:**

- As the global pandemic creates challenges to the legitimacy for many governments in ASEAN member states, how are we going to mitigate this situation and how national governments maintain their legitimacy without sacrificing fragile trust in the region?
- We know that countries are experiencing this global pandemic differently, not to mention the different policies that these countries are implemented in facing the challenges caused by the global pandemic. For example, like Indonesia and its new policy called the 'new normal', this new policy has the possibility to affect trust between Indonesia and other countries in the region.

**QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION**

**Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar**

- Now we have come to Question and Answer session, I will read 3 questions from the participants and these questions are directed to Ambassador Deng Xijun:
  - 1) What are the positive impacts of China's poverty alleviation and building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way on ASEAN especially at the post pandemic period?
  - 2) ASEAN and Hong Kong have close economic cooperation and recently China decided to press ahead with a national security legislation for Hong Kong, will it affect Hong Kong's stages of international financial center and its economic cooperation with ASEAN?
  - 3) Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, some countries will withdraw their support to BRI, what is your opinion regarding this matter?

**H.E. Deng Xijun:**

- This year (2020) is the final year to win the battle against poverty, China will achieve a series of ambitious goals scheduled to lift all people living under the current poverty line out of poverty to complete the building of a moderate prosperous society in all respects and to achieve the first goal in the UN Agenda 2030 on sustainable development 10 years in advance. This is China's contribution for the global cost of poverty reduction as President Xi Jin Ping pointed out recently that the battle against poverty is in the critical phase and we need to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to take multi-faceted measures to consolidate what has been done and achieve complete poverty reduction with higher quality and win complete victory of the battle against poverty.
- China attaches great importance to poverty reduction exchange and cooperation with ASEAN countries when Premier Li Keqiang attended the 70s ASEAN+3 Summit in November 2014, he proposed initiative of the Chinese government to allocate 100 million RMB to conduct poverty alleviation project in rural areas of ASEAN countries and project of poverty reduction cooperation in East Asia. The first project has been conducted in several ASEAN countries like Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. China has also set up limited key projects including the ASEAN-China forum on social development and poverty reduction and ASEAN 3 exchange program. China is always committed towards the poverty reduction cooperation with ASEAN countries contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions for a better life of people in ASEAN.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- About Hong Kong national security legislation, actually you may all know that the first session of the 70s national people congress adopted yesterday is about the decision to establish and improve legal framework and enforcement mechanism for safeguarding national security in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region after deliberation, we all know the national security is the basic precondition for the existence and development of a nation. However, since the abandonment bill disturbance in 2019, the Hong Kong independence and radical separatist forces have become increasingly rampant with escalating violent terrorist activities. If you follow the Hong Kong situation closely, you can find the smashing and the burning in many places since last year which has seriously put Hong Kong into turmoil and endangered normal life of its people.
- To make things worse for interfering forces, the Taiwan independence forces have stepped up intervention in Hong Kong. All of which severely undermines Hong Kong public security and seriously challenges the bottom line of one country two systems' principle and opposes real threats to the national security of China.
- The reason for the problem is that since the return of Hong Kong 23 years ago, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has not acted out its constitutional duty for national security in line with China's constitution and basic law, there is a clear loophole in Hong Kong legal system, and the absence of a mechanism of enforcement all there is left Hong Kong unprotected.
- The Chinese central government bears the primary ultimate responsibility for safeguarding national security which is the core of one country two systems and the foundation for its existence. When national security is ensured, Hong Kong can enjoy prosperity and stability to establish and improve legal framework for safeguarding national security in Hong Kong. It will protect the law-abiding Hong Kong citizens who are the overwhelming majority guaranteed the legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong residents, also the international community such as ASEAN countries.
- Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese investment in the BRI partner countries has increased to 11,7% in the first quarter and trade volume was up by 3,2%. Steady progress is being made in the China-planned railway and dual fuel power plant in Cambodia, construction has resumed for a number of projects suspended due to COVID-19. All of these will generate strong impetus for the most countries' efforts to beat the virus and revitalize the country, BRI responds to core countries for development and meets the fundamentals of the international community, it will enable countries to work together to fight common challenges such as COVID-19. After the pandemic, BRI will show greater vitality with synergy from more countries towards a world of common prosperity.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020 ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

### **Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar:**

- The important note is that we have to strengthen the existing ASEAN led mechanism as there is some criticism regarding the performance of ASEAN in facing the global pandemic. Each country tries to look inward to grapple with internal problems, we have also seen strong cooperation between ASEAN member states with China, China has been very generous and supportive in this condition. We hope that there will be a lot of lessons learned from this pandemic and we do not need to always create new mechanisms but strengthening the system is the most important thing for us to do and it is what we need to ensure.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

### **Dr Dino Patti Djalal:**

- I want to thank Professor Dewi Fortuna Anwar for being a great moderator and I want to thank all of our speakers especially Ambassador Deng Xijun, Deputy Secretary General Kung Phook and also my good friend, His Excellency Jose Tavares. Today's discussion has covered quite a wide conceptual policy dimension and practical steps in addressing the challenges of COVID-19. ASEAN is 53 years old now and there have been very few occasions which has prompted ASEAN to respond significantly as for example, the Cambodian conflict, the end of the Cold War, the 1998 Financial Crisis and the last will be 2008 Financial Crisis. These are historical events that force ASEAN to respond in a significant way. I think COVID-19 is also one of the milestone events as it affects all ASEAN nations in a very deep way. I do think that the COVID-19 crisis is something that can and should make us closer as it affects not just ASEAN but the whole world and this crisis will prove to make ASEAN and China closer in terms of their cooperation and what is important that ASEAN China cooperation should need to be 'science-based', 'need-based' and 'resource-based'.
- China cooperation with ASEAN is well appreciated. Why this is so? Because China is the first victim of the virus, China has the know-how and political will to cooperate with ASEAN countries.
- I should say there has been important things that has changed the way we are handling the crisis. If I can name 3 things that has changed the policy makers and affect the population: 1) Wuhan lockdown in China, 2) The closure of Ka'bah, in Mecca, 3) The outbreak in Italy.
- Without these 3 events, I think the Indonesian policy makers would have a really hard time in convincing the population that we need to take drastic measure. I do not think the PSBB (the partial lockdown) that is happening in Indonesia could be taken without reference to the 3 earlier events.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- ASEAN-China cooperation is in good shape and is one of the best cooperation that ASEAN is having in terms of COVID-19 management. The challenge will be on the technical ministries. The foreign ministries deal with one another all the time, but if you look at the Health Ministry, Immigration, and the other ministries; they need to step up across ASEAN and China in terms of cooperation because they are less-used to this kind of fast paced substantive cooperation.
- I do hope that the ASEAN-China cooperation on COVID-19 could be one of the models of global cooperation on tackling COVID-19. I say this because international cooperation is really slow to develop, when the virus came in the late December. The international cooperation did not move until February, it was really slow.
- We are still seeing a lack of global leadership. I think this is what is China trying to show, is to help and do more to other countries.
- The world is definitely watching China, why? Because this is historic crisis and big countries are always being watched on how they behave. So far, I like what I hear and see. We encourage China to keep saying and doing the right thing which means that we are sharing the future, sharing humanity, and the vaccine should be the global public goods. These are the things that the world would like to see to be realized in terms of policy.
- I also want to strike; how important it is the ASEAN-China cooperation is impactful to the grassroots. Why do I say this? Because ASEAN is 53 years old but, in many ways is having a hard time for going to the grassroots. In Indonesia, my favorite anecdote is if you ask how many percent of population understand what ASEAN Economic Community is? I would say it is like 2 percent; even that is an ambitious number, some people say 1 percent or less. The point is ASEAN challenge has been really how to go to the grassroots. The grassroots is most affected by this thing and this is where the grassroots needs to see ASEAN is relevant to their problem and ASEAN-China cooperation is also relevant to their problem. The supply of PCR from China, medical mask, and so on: this is very relevant at the moment to show to the grassroots that when the public is having difficult time ASEAN and China are there to try to make a difference.
- On the grassroots, one thing that worries me is the rise of conspiracy theory, some celebrities and iconic people are taking this up and more people are believing this. I really hope that ASEAN and China in terms of government can maintain science-based and rationale policy making process and not given to this wild populist conspiracy theory.
- I think it is interesting to see if the COVID-19 agenda will push aside other agenda or the COVID-19 agenda should be kept in complement with the other agenda i.e trade, investment, education, diplomatic, climate, etc. I say this because the thinking within every nation now is “COVID agenda means all the other things are forgotten or pushed aside.” I am not saying that one is right over the other but we need to understand that this is happening now and where we are going? COVID-19 pushing the other agenda aside or COVID and all the other agenda treated as part of the same solutions to this grand problem.

## Virtual Jakarta Forum on ASEAN-China Relations 2020

### ASEAN-China Cooperation in Dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic

- I think the key question now is what happen to the economic dimension of COVID-19? I agree with all the other speakers who spoke about this. We have really a challenge on not just dealing with COVID-19 in terms of public health but in terms of economic fallout, and the most serious thing that we need to anticipate is the rise of the new poor in ASEAN countries. In Indonesia now, we expect 5 million people are joining the new poor as the result of becoming unemployment. This will create economic-social and political crisis if these are not handled right. So, the ability of ASEAN to response economically and the way of China to remain relevant to ASEAN's economy future especially in terms of trade, education, technology, etc will be very critical in the near time.
- I like the advocacy that ASEAN and China should have increased cooperation in WHO because I fear that WHO can be made into a scapegoat on the COVID-19 issue and can be very dangerous if this happens. Because WHO is the place where we all need to cooperate and where we need multilateral solution and we really need to maintain the integrity of WHO.
- Finally, the big elephant in the room that we are not discussing is the US-China rivalry. This rivalry is affecting how the world responding to the COVID-19 and some impacts on ASEAN-China cooperation. I have to say that ASEAN countries are not really interested in US-China rivalry because that is not really relevant for our problem. We also hope that US and China can work together to address the COVID-19, unfortunately this is not going to happen because the US domestic political situation that is closer to the election would make it impossible for that cooperation.
- But the question for ASEAN is “Does ASEAN stay quiet for this? or Do we actually speak the truth to the powers?” This is actually about the question of whether or not ASEAN will be willing to step up and take a stand on this rivalry.
- So, with that I would like to say thank you to everybody who took part and the big question that we face now is not just how do we recover but also how do we rebound to be better? There are about 10 T USD of economic stimulus globally that will be thrown to the countries affected by COVID-19 to make sure they recover well but the question is not just how or when they would recover but how this 10 T USD global economic stimulus can make the world rebound better and stronger? This means how do we make this 10 T USD stimulus make the economy free from COVID-19, healthier, also greener, more resilient, more inclusive, more carbon-free and fairer. I do expect that COVID-19 will create a more equitable economy and society and this is why the task of how do we rebound better will be the most important historical, intellectual, and policy question for the world and also for ASEAN and China.