



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia pledges USD 16m for COVID-19 recovery during ASEAN-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Australia sees ASEAN at the core of the Indo-Pacific region. During yesterday's ASEAN-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Australian Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Marise Payne reinforced Australia's shared commitment to maintaining an open, peaceful, stable and rules-based region, the principles of ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and fighting disinformation in the region.

Australia's health and economy is closely tied with our southeast Asian partners, and ASEAN continues to play a vital role in responding to COVID-19.

At yesterday's meeting, Senator Payne laid out a plan for how Australia could step-up cooperation with southeast Asia to combat COVID-19, and to help chart a course towards mutual economic recovery.

Senator Payne announced a new USD 16 million package to help bolster ASEAN member states' health security, stability and economic recovery.

This package includes:

- On **health security**, a new initiative focused on reducing the risks of pandemics through increased institutional linkages and collaboration; improved hygiene practices at wet markets; and additional scholarships and fellowships in Australia.
- On **stability**, a new ASEAN-Australia Political-Security Partnership, which will strengthen responses to shared challenges such as maritime security, cyber security, transnational crime, and women peace and security; in addition to further support to enable vulnerable migrant worker communities to access safe migration pathways.
- On **economic recovery**, an extension of our successful ASEAN-Australia Digital Trade Standards initiative to ensure that digital trade helps drive the region's economic recovery through to 2022; as well as support to the ASEAN Post-Pandemic Recovery Plan which emphasises a collective, region-wide approach.

This package adds to Australia's wide-ranging Strategic Partnership with ASEAN, as well as the substantial bilateral work already underway across the region, including through Australia's bilateral development partnership with Cambodia.

“We all have a stake in the security of our region and cooperation is essential if we are to avoid a prolonged health and economic crisis,” said His Excellency Pablo Kang, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia.

“Cambodia will be able to access this new package of regional initiatives for ASEAN, which will complement the work we are already doing through our bilateral development partnership to aid Cambodia’s response to COVID-19.

“For Australia and Cambodia, and for our shared region, addressing these unprecedented challenges will require an unprecedented level of international cooperation.

“Rather than turning inward, we will stand together through this pandemic, as a long-standing Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, just as we have in past crises.”

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Caption: Australian Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Marise Payne, addressing yesterday’s ASEAN-Australia Foreign Ministers’ Meeting

Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Cambodia (MFAIC)’s Facebook