

INDONESIA HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON THE INDO-PACIFIC

JAKARTA, 20 MARCH 2019

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - PLENARY INTERVENTION

Acknowledgements

Madame Chair

Ministers, Ambassadors, Delegates.

We share with Indonesian and with our ASEAN partners, a 45 year history of collective regionalism.

With ASEAN, and with our East Asia Summit friends and partners across Asia, Australia and the Americas, we share an understanding of the need to work together to find common solutions to common challenges, based on our very strong bonds of friendship.

Those bonds of friendship and cooperation have been very evident during a very tragic week for New Zealand, one in which we have suffered a terrorist act that is without precedent in New Zealand's history.

Some of the killed in Christchurch were from countries represented here today.

For all the victims on 15 March, New Zealand was their home and they were part of our community.

No matter where the victims hailed from, whether they were visitors or residents.

We would like to thank the political leaders, religious leaders, and official representatives of countries around this table and beyond for the words and letters of condolence, of comfort, of assistance and offers of practical support that we have received.

As New Zealand faces this grave event, we greatly appreciate that our friends and partners around the region and the world are supporting us.

We see this as an attack on our society of tolerance and freedom on which we have built the fabric of our democracy.

Our response will be one dedicated to preserving the freedoms, principles, and openness that has characterised New Zealand as a society.

The government and the community will ensure that we support the rights of all religious communities, including those of the Islamic faith that were targeted.

It is typical of New Zealand that people of all religions have come together to support Muslim New Zealanders.

Leaders and members of Churches, Synagogues, and Temples have supported Leader and members of Mosques.

The violent act we have experienced has demonstrated that none of us are immune from determined extremist threats to our peace and security.

Looking forward, we are renewed in our determination to work together towards creating a more peaceful and secure country and a more peaceful and secure region.

Indo-Pacific

We acknowledge Indonesia's initiative and Thailand's role as the current ASEAN Chair in facilitating dialogue on the Indo-Pacific.

We appreciate the important leadership roles that they and all our ASEAN colleagues play in facilitating our shared understanding of this region.

In this Forum, we welcome this opportunity to explain New Zealand's position on the use of the term "Indo-Pacific" and how we understand it.

We also look forward to hearing and better understanding the approaches of others.

This region – in times of tragedy and in times of opportunity – is our region. It is one in which we are deeply invested: politically, economically, and socially.

It is a simple fact that we are engaged in a region in which most members have interests across both the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, across land and sea and air.

Within the East Asia Summit organisation that we share, the membership includes India as well as the countries of East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific.

We should pragmatically recognise this fact. It is right that that forum reflects Indo-Pacific interests.

It is also a fact that, whatever countries call it, ASEAN and the countries of South East Asia are at the centre of most regional visions.

Madame Chair, New Zealand does not see any need to be too rigid in our labels. Our position is a pragmatic one.

We are comfortable using the term "Indo-Pacific" as a broad geographic description and in forums based on the East Asia Summit because it is accurate to do so.

When we host APEC in 2021, the Asia Pacific Economic Community, including South American countries as well, we will use terminology that makes sense in that forum.

When we engage with our Pacific Island partners, in a region in which we are also fundamentally connected, we will continue to use the term "Pacific". Because that is respectful of the Pacific Islands vision of their Blue Pacific region and our close relationship with them.

Yet at some level, given our multiple interests and those of others, we are of the view that it is also time to stop focusing on what labels we apply to the region.

We could spend forever debating terminology or definitions to the detriment of action consistent with broad regional interests.

In our approach New Zealand has focused on consistently applying the principles that we want to see apply, and on how we work together with effective delivery of our undertakings to take us all forward.

For New Zealand and our approach to Indo-Pacific the following seven principles are critical:

- openness and inclusivity;
- transparency;
- freedom of navigation and overflight;
- adherence to international law;
- open markets;
- respect for sovereignty; and
- ASEAN centrality.

Madame Chair, these are principles that are grounded in this region.

They are the foundations of the ASEAN Charter, and of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation which we have all signed up to.

Recognising that common ground is why New Zealand welcomed Minister Marsudi's initiative in bringing us together.

It is why we welcome ASEAN's enduring leadership in facilitating regional cooperation and in refining regional norms.

As countries of this region, we collectively face economic, political and security issues that demand cooperative solutions.

We face new external conditions, new challenges.

We need to explore ways in which we can engage and solve the issues that affect us all.

The goal for us all as we face future challenges though must be to preserve the cooperative ethos that has underpinned this region's peace and development.

With political determination, consistent principles, appropriate diplomatic forums, and patient discussion, we can face the future with confidence.

We need to do so.