

Embassy of India

Jakarta

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INDO-PACIFIC COOPERATION

JAKARTA, 20 MARCH 2019

Country Statement: INDIA

Madam Chair Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentleman. Like other colleagues, we offer our deepest condolences to New Zealand on the tragic loss of lives. Our prayers go out to the victims and their families. We all need to work closely to deal with terror in all its manifestations. We also offer sympathies to Indonesia on the damage suffered as a result of floods.

2. Madam chair, we applaud the initiative taken by Indonesia in hosting this timely. The title of the Dialogue very effectively points to the salience of a "Peaceful, Prosperous and Inclusive" Indo-Pacific region and also reflects how Indonesia looks at this region. India's own vision for the Indo-Pacific is not dissimilar. We believe that the fundamental pillars of peace, prosperity and inclusivity provide the common core for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

3. Prime Minister of India, while addressing the Shangri-La Dialogue last year in Singapore, very clearly laid out India's vision for the Indo-Pacific. India's approach to the Indo-Pacific is set against the backdrop of the developments of recent years that have led to a marked shift of global political, economic and strategic activities in our extended neighbourhood, a geographical space now increasingly described as the Indo-Pacific. To us, Indo-Pacific is a logical construct that recognizes the continued importance of the Pacific and the growing economic and strategic salience of the Indian Ocean for our common prosperity. As a contiguous space extending from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas, with shared opportunities and challenges, the Indo-Pacific reflects geo-political and geo-economic realities of today's world. Unlike the term "Asia-Pacific" which is a concept borrowed from the military history of the region, we believe that "Indo-Pacific" is a forward looking construct and symbolizes progress, connectivity and prosperity based on shared values and interests.

4. The Indo-Pacific in our vision is a free, open, peaceful, and prosperous and above all, an inclusive space, that contributes to building an open, multipolar and transparent political and economic order in the region. Concerted evolution of such an international rules-based order is imperative for bringing about economic prosperity and ensuring peace and stability in the region. We believe that upholding of these norms individually and collectively holds the key for a more connected and integrated Indo-Pacific region.

5. We do not see the Indo-Pacific region as a club of limited members. It is also not a strategy to seek domination. And by no means do we consider it as directed against anyone. As a geographical space, it is not, and it cannot be, a negative construct. Our vision for this region is a positive one.

6. The countries of the ASEAN connect the two great oceans of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean in both the geographical and civilizational sense. ASEAN centrality, therefore, is integral to our vision for the Indo-Pacific. Our “Act East” Policy is its main driver. Our commitment to the centrality of ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific region is exemplified by our active participation in ASEAN-led institutions and fora. ASEAN has a leading role in taking the Indo-Pacific region forward.

7. For us, a prosperous Indo-Pacific is based on robust physical and digital connectivity and open, fair and equitable trade and investment system. Major economies in the region have an important role in contributing to the economic prosperity of the Indo-Pacific by acting as engines for growth and by executing projects based on development partnership with countries in the region. India also seeks to contribute to economic prosperity and cohesion of the Indo-Pacific by contributing to the region’s economic output and by promoting physical and digital connectivity in the region based on universally recognized international norms.

8. Countries in the Indo-Pacific region have greatly benefitted from globalization and, therefore, it is important that we reaffirm our commitment for an open, fair and equitable trade and investment system in the region. India stands for an open, balanced and stable trade environment in the Indo-Pacific region, which takes into account the aspirations of all countries. We believe that this should be the basis for finalization of the RCEP, which must balance among trade, investment and services.

9. With a significant part of global sea-borne trade passing through this region, the economic prosperity of Indo-Pacific is underpinned by mutual security. For this, an international rules-based order and respect for international law is of fundamental importance – where all countries uphold the principles of freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded commerce and resolution of maritime disputes by peaceful means. The principle of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity rests at its core.

10. The Indo-Pacific region offers unlimited opportunities for cooperation. There are areas such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Reduction, Search and Rescue operations, anti-piracy, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation and collaborative maritime domain awareness, where furthering cooperation will help in building common security in the region. Similarly, cooperation in the area of

blue economy and collaborative work towards ecologically sustainable development of the region's ocean resources will only be mutually beneficial.

11. With extensive engagement and interests in this region, India has important stakes in the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific. Deepening engagement in this region is fundamental for us. Prime Minister of India has described our engagement in the region as "SAGAR", which is an acronym for "Security and Growth for All in the Region" and very aptly means "ocean" in Hindi. The idea of SAGAR stands for and very succinctly sums up our approach to the Indo-Pacific region. Our developmental efforts in terms of the "Act East" Policy, and our contributions through forums such as Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, shows our commitment towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

12. Our vision of Indo-Pacific flows from our philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" which means 'The world is one family' that believes in shared interests, collective prosperity and inclusive structure. We believe that it is our common responsibility to work in unison to create an architecture that provides wings to the aspirations of the people of this region while ensuring stability and security in the region.

13. Madam Chair, in conclusion, I once again congratulate Indonesia for taking this initiative. We thank Indonesia for its warm and generous hospitality. The arrangements are excellent and I am certain that the deliberations would greatly contribute to the debate on Indo-Pacific.

Thank you.