120. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security and freedom of navigation and over-flight in and above the South China Sea. We welcomed the operationalization of the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN Member States and China in Response to Maritime Emergencies in the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and look forward to the early operationalization of the other early harvest measure which is the Joint Statement on the Application of the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) in the South China Sea. We took note of concerns expressed by some Leaders over recent developments in the area. We reaffirmed the importance of the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities, and avoiding actions that may further complicate the situation, and pursuing the peaceful resolution of disputes, without resorting to the threat or use of force.

121. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We took note of the improving cooperation between ASEAN and China. We welcomed the progress to complete a framework of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) by middle of this year, in order to facilitate the early conclusion of an effective COC. We recognized the long-term benefits that would be gained from having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability and sustainable development.