54. We discussed the situation in the South China Sea and further reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, stability, and maritime security in the region in accordance with the principles contained in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), ASEAN's Six-Point Principles on the South China Sea, and the Joint Statement of the 15th ASEAN China Summit on the 10th Anniversary of the DOC. In this regard, we reaffirmed the collective commitments under the DOC to ensuring the resolution of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, without resorting to the threat or use of force, while exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities.

55. We remain committed to ensure the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety, including the mutually agreed joint cooperative activities and projects in accordance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC. In this regard, we welcomed the commencement of formal consultations between ASEAN and China on the COC following the 6th ASEAN-China Senior Officials Meeting on the Implementation of the DOC and the 9th ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the DOC held in Suzhou, China on 14-15 September 2013. Taking into account the importance of the 10th anniversary of the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership in 2013 and the positive progress of dialogue and consultations, we looked forward to intensifying official consultations with China on the development of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) with a view to its early conclusion. The COC will serve to enhance peace, stability and prosperity in the region. We also looked forward to developing the ideas of establishing hotlines of communication to further enhance trust, confidence and to respond to emergency situations at sea and cooperate in the area of search and rescue for vessels in distress at sea as part of an "early harvest" package of the COC.