

**CHINA'S DIPLOMACY AND STAND ON
IMPLEMENTING THE DECLARATION
ON THE CONDUCT OF PARTIES IN
THE SOUTH CHINA SEA**

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Executive Summary

1. China made a concerted diplomatic effort to ensure a smooth and fruitful discussion of the South China Sea (SCS) issue in Bali in July 2011.
2. The adoption of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) is a breakthrough in talks on the SCS issue and is conducive to reducing tensions in the region.
3. The Guidelines provide the framework for the implementation of possible joint cooperative activities, measures and projects stipulated in the DOC, which are politically less sensitive.
4. The aim is the eventual realization of a legally binding Code of Conduct (COC) in the SCS with the implementation of these concrete measures or activities of the DOC.
5. The Guidelines, like the DOC, are not legally binding and do not address territorial disputes; they only provide guidance for cooperation between the parties pending a comprehensive and durable settlement of the SCS disputes.
6. To promote practical cooperation under the DOC framework, China has proposed a series of initiatives including holding a seminar on navigation freedom in the SCS and establishing three technical committees on marine scientific research, environmental protection and other activities. It has also reaffirmed its readiness to undertake the three cooperation projects already agreed upon by the parties.
7. China considers the Guidelines as an important milestone for cooperation between China and ASEAN countries, and that the current pressing task is to start practical cooperation in the SCS.

8. For China, the significance of its endorsement of the Guidelines and its commitment to work with ASEAN to formulate a COC is twofold: to show its political will to settle disputes peacefully and maintain peace and stability in the region; and to demonstrate that China and ASEAN have the wisdom and ability to settle disputes by themselves without external involvement or interference.