



He said that "we are pleased by the joint communique" achieved on Monday in the meeting between ASEAN member states and China, which renewed commitment to managing the disputes.

"We believe that this is a step in the right direction, and we believe that in this spirit, the progress will continue in the future," he added.

Zhou Fangyin, a professor of Chinese foreign policy at Guangdong Institute for International Strategies, said the meetings "set a tone" for ASEAN's future South China Sea policies, and ASEAN's not taking a position on the arbitration ruling "will be a restraint for Manila".

