

**POSITION STATEMENT ENDORSED AND ADOPTED BY
THE 4TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING ON DRUG MATTERS
29 OCTOBER 2015, LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA**

The following position statement represents a united ASEAN approach, which was endorsed and adopted by the Ministers at the 4th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (4th AMMD) held in Langkawi, Malaysia on 29 October 2015. We also recommend that the key points of this position statement be incorporated into the Chairman's Statement at the AMMD, and form the basis of an ASEAN statement to be delivered at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem, to be held at the UN Headquarters from 19 to 21 April 2016. We also propose that these key points be included in each ASEAN Member State's individual country statement at UNGASS:

- a. Zero-tolerance Approach against Drugs. ASEAN embraces a zero-tolerance approach against drugs. Zero-tolerance means that we strongly commit to suppress and eliminate the scourge of drugs and condemn its abuse in our society. Failure to deal with the drug problem undermines society, and presents a threat to national security and the rule of law, socio-economic development and the sustainable livelihood of citizens. Drug abuse affects not just the abuser but also his family and the community. While some drug-related support services may be implemented, ASEAN is committed to a zero-tolerance approach to realise its regional vision of a Drug-Free ASEAN, so as to provide our people and communities with a society free from drug abuse and its ill-effects.
- b. Comprehensive and balanced approach towards drugs: ASEAN's approach to the drug problem has been to address it in a comprehensive, balanced and holistic manner, involving both demand and supply reduction measures. Upstream preventive measures, as well as downstream enforcement and intervention measures, are necessary to address the drug problem. The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of drug addicts into society are just as important as taking a tough stance against drug traffickers and those who wish to profit off drug addicts.
- c. Support the centrality of the international drug control conventions and stand firm against drugs, including being resolute against calls to legalise controlled drugs: ASEAN is of the view that the existing three international drug control conventions¹, as well as other relevant international instruments, should continue to serve as a basis for the world drug policy, and continue to remain relevant in meeting the challenges of drug control in the 21st century. ASEAN has observed drug policy reforms recently undertaken by some countries which seek to decriminalise the consumption of controlled drugs or even to legalise

¹ The three main international drug conventions are: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

the consumption of controlled drugs. While we respect that these countries have taken the approaches of decriminalisation and legalisation domestically given their own circumstances, these approaches should not be imposed on other countries.

- d. Sovereign right of each country: Each country has the sovereign right and responsibility to decide on the best approach to address the drug problem in their country, taking into account the historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts and norms of its society. The transnational challenges posed by the world drug problem should be addressed with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Every Government and its citizens should be free to decide for themselves on the most appropriate approach to tackle its own drug problem. There is no one-size-fits-all approach towards addressing the drug issue, as each country has its own unique set of challenges.
 - e. Ready to work closely with other regions: Despite the progress achieved by ASEAN Member States at the national and regional level since the target of a “Drug Free ASEAN 2015” was set at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok in July 2000, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2014 research findings on South-East Asia still showed an alarming drug situation. In this regard, ASEAN expresses grave concerns about the escalating threat of production, trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs in and throughout South-East Asia. ASEAN therefore re-affirms its commitment to take collaborative and cooperative operational measures with other regions to a higher level, as part of a global collaborative effort to address and mitigate the scourge of illicit drugs.
 - f. Supporting the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND): ASEAN remains firm in supporting the role of the CND as the principal policymaking organ of the United Nations on matters of international drug control and as the governing body of the UNODC’s drug programme.
2. Apart from the above key points, the 36th ASOD proposes that the Chairman’s Statement at the 4th AMMD include the following recommendations:
- a. ASEAN Member States are encouraged to be represented at the highest-level for UNGASS 2016;
 - b. ASEAN Member States to deliver a joint ASEAN Statement at UNGASS in April 2016 and the 59th Session of the CND in March 2016, in addition to each Member State’s individual country statement; and
 - c. That the 4th AMMD seeks the support and endorsement of the ASEAN Leaders at their November 2015 Summit for the position statement and recommendations above.