



JOINT STATEMENT
18th AUN and 7th ASEAN+3 Educational Forum
“The Relevance of Higher Education in the Digital Era”

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We, the students of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) Member Universities and the Plus Three countries, gathered on 4 May 2018 at Universitas Indonesia on the occasion of the 18th AUN and 7th ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers’ Contest;
2. We acknowledged with appreciation the Chairman’s Statement of the 31st ASEAN Summit, held on 13 November 2017 in Manila, Philippines, on the importance of creating appropriate policy in response to the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in many relevant areas such as ICT infrastructure and education. In this light, it is important for ASEAN to capitalize on our young, educated and technology-savvy population to help boost the region’s economic growth and prosperity. We also supported the proposal of the ASEAN+3 member countries to study the next phase of East Asia Vision Group III to include a focus on the Fourth Industrial Revolution in order to set long-term goals of regional integration;
3. We acknowledged with satisfaction the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 that is envisioned to embrace the evolving digital technology as leverage to enhance trade and investments, provide an e-based business platform, promote good governance, and facilitate the use of green technology;
4. We supported the ASEAN Declaration on Innovation that call for cooperation among ASEAN Member States towards the changes in the ASEAN community as it becomes increasingly Science, Technology and Innovation-enabled and therefore more innovative, competitive, vibrant, sustainable, and economically-integrated. Accordingly, it is important for ASEAN Member States to stimulate innovation literacy as well as the continuous development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Information Communication Technology (ICT) generic, specialist and complementary skills, to equip the workforce with the skills and competencies for innovation through education and training policies attuned to the demands of our advancing economies; and
5. With these statements, we, as future leaders, hereby declare the following recommendations with regards to the enhancement of the skills and competencies needed for youth in the digital era to be achieved through the collective actions of the governments and higher education institutions of ASEAN+3 member countries.

II. RECOGNIZING THE CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

A. YOUTH

Recognizing the lack of resources available for the youth to equip themselves with technology-based skills;

Gravely concerned for the youth who are not ready to accept the disruptive changes in the digital era;

Drawing attention to the ability of digital devices to enable individuals to become creators in order to promote the expansion of their ideas;

Considering the significance of international collaboration to stimulate the fusion of a variety of individual ideas which culminates in innovation; and

Concerned for the lack of motivation to continue learning outside of formal education institutions.

B. UNIVERSITY

Recognizing the lack of digital infrastructure in universities that created the digital divide in the different student populations in ASEAN+3 countries;

Alarmed by the challenges brought about by the existence of an immense language barrier between the ASEAN+3 countries;

Noting with deep concern the lack of technological proficiencies of the lecturers and educators to teach in the digital era;

Keeping in mind the important skills that universities have to further develop in the midst of the digital era are the following: complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, and many others;

Taking note of the current curriculum that has not yet been improved to address the changes in the digital era;

Noting with deep concern the prevalent misuse of technologies among the users relating to cybercrime and plagiarism;

Acknowledging the skill mismatch between the demand of employers and the supply of workforce from Universities that is one of the leading causes of unemployment; and

Realizing the 4th industrial revolution has greatly impacted the shifting of the job market.

C. GOVERNMENT

Recognizing the vast differences in quality assurance programs, accreditation processes, ICT usage and regulations, and performance indicators with regards to education of different countries in the ASEAN+3 region;

Addressing the inequality of digital facilities and literacy in several ASEAN+3 countries; and

Acknowledging that some ASEAN+3 countries have not yet fully implemented the MOOCs at a national level because of constraints with financial problems, geographical location, and time limitations.

III. ACTION PLAN TO MAINTAIN THE RELEVANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

A. YOUTH

1. **Recommend** the compulsory exchange of students with specific skillsets such as ICT between urban areas and rural areas in order to enhance technology skills for educators and students in rural areas across all ASEAN+3 countries with several incentives such as but not limited to:
 - a. Allowance programs;
 - b. Additional credits; and
 - c. Digital Devices.
2. **Endorse** the model of Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) for skill-based education in ICT across ASEAN in several sectors such as:
 - a. Integration of ICT in the skillset; and
 - b. Competencies in using machines and equipment in the digital era.
3. **Encourage** the use of a digital portal under the AUN jurisdiction which is a platform, established by the youth and for the youth in the ASEAN+3 region, to share educational content created by users and to provide an opportunity for youth to become the creators, thereby enhancing digital literacy and creativity skills. Specific examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Creation of educational videos such as tutorials, leading to attainment of digital video editing skills;
 - b. Making of presentations to share and spread ideas, developing communication skills; and
 - c. Discussion and comment sections for every entry in the portal, encouraging interaction and communication between users.
4. **Emphasize** that the suggested portal is accessible to users from all nations within the ASEAN +3 community, to ensure the diversity in both the cultural background of the userbase and the content these users create, and
5. **Express hope** that the portal leads the youth to be engaged in self-development of the aforementioned skills outside of their formal education, such as school curricula, to

promote informal learning, such as personal growth, which constitutes learning outside of the classroom or workplace.

B. UNIVERSITY

1. **Encourage** ASEAN+3 member countries to work together to build an ASEAN-level Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in order to further enhance the equal access of education and initiate the borderless transfer of information in the future, which can be done through:
 - a. Creating a unified server for all MOOCs of ASEAN+3 countries;
 - b. Encouraging universities in the ASEAN Universities Network (AUN) to contribute online academic learning courses to be uploaded into ASEAN-level MOOCs for all subjects under all kinds of majors;
 - c. Making ASEAN-level MOOCs available for access by all students in ASEAN+3 countries; and
 - d. Providing support for student consultations with their current universities for transfer credits after taking classes in ASEAN-level MOOCs.
2. **Call upon** member countries to bridge the gap on the existence and prevalence of the language barrier between the ASEAN+3 in a bigger scale by:
 - a. Estimating the country position about the language barrier to get an overview of the general situation;
 - b. Providing compulsory English subtitles and transcripts for the lessons in MOOCs that were conducted in the respective languages of the ASEAN+3 nations;
 - c. Endorsing the use of optional subtitles and transcripts for countries to translate the MOOCs of other ASEAN+3 countries into their domestic language, which should be conducted by the universities and content creators; and
 - d. Employing a more visual approach by using graphics, charts, and other visual aids to help students understand better.
3. **Recommend** ASEAN+3 universities under AUN to do capacity building between educators to further prepare the educators in digital era, this can be realized through several ways such as:
 - a. Encouraging educators to engage in exchange programs inside and outside their countries and regions to share their knowledge and technical proficiency to fellow educators.
 - b. Preparing AUN educators for the digital era through online trainings and programs personalized to teach different major;
 - c. Establishing online discussion forums for educators to enable consultation regarding teaching techniques and best practices in different countries; and
 - d. Creating an advisory body in charge of dealing with competency issues for educators.
4. **Encourage** ASEAN+3 universities to improve their curriculum through the alteration from traditional literacy (reading, writing, and math) into new literacy as follow:
 - a. Digital literacy which consists of the skills necessary to read and interpret the data gathered such as Big Data Analysis;

- b. Technological Literacy which consists of the skills necessary to implement and create platforms such applications, websites, coding, programming and artificial intelligence;
 - c. Human Literacy which consists of the skills to convey their ideas with effective communication and design in the digital era.
5. **Draws the attention** of the youth for the right usage of technologies to hinder plagiarism, cybercrime, and hacking through empowerment seminars and community support in the transition to the digital era.
 6. **Support** public universities-private corporation partnerships to address the job mismatch and the improvement of the digital infrastructure through ways such as:
 - a. Initiating funding mechanisms for digital infrastructure;
 - b. Encouraging free national e-portfolio to be more accessible for private companies;
 - c. Spearheading projection programs for high-demand skills and cooperation with employers; and
 - d. Establishing transparent allocation programs as an accountability measure to hinder corruption.
 7. **Strongly suggest** ASEAN national universities to do projections program in their own country to foresee the shifting of the job market in order to match the universities' curriculum, this can be achieved through ways such as:
 - a. Big Data Analysis in the country; and
 - b. Cooperation with employers to further investigate the high-demand skills and qualifications needed in the digital era.

C. GOVERNMENT

1. **Endorse** the quality assurance & framework within ASEAN+3 universities to further encourage the equal quality between universities through:
 - a. Framework for education quality in universities and TVET Programs;
 - b. Adoption of a local framework for ASEAN Standards;
 - c. Accreditation Process; and
 - d. Implementation, monitoring, and protection of the ASEAN-Level MOOCs System especially with regards to intellectual property issues.
2. **Encourage** ASEAN +3 countries to enhance their respective digital infrastructure especially in the rural areas as a step to further bridge the gap through ways such as:
 - a. Collaborating with the expertise from developed countries to train the local staffs in order to introduce digital literacy to the rural parts of their countries;
 - b. Pledging the support from developed countries in various sources ranging from references to databases and technical equipment; and
 - c. Allocating the resources to build digital infrastructure in the rural areas.
3. **Recommend** ASEAN+3 member countries to build a compulsory national MOOCs system between domestic universities to further integrate national higher education learnings which can be done through several means such as:

- a. Pilot experiment in designated university from each country to implement national MOOCs system to determine the success rate of MOOCs before expanding it on a bigger scale;
- b. Implementation across ASEAN+3 countries if the pilot experiment yields positive results; and
- c. Standardizing the national credit transfer system and suggesting the awards or certificates from the respective universities to give recognition to the lessons accomplished in the national MOOCs system.

IV. CLOSING

The realization of this Joint Statement will be accomplished through enhanced cooperation among the network of the ASEAN+3 students and relevant stakeholders. This Joint Statement will be submitted to the ASEAN+3 Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) through the ASEAN Secretariat.

Adopted in Jakarta this 4 May 2018

Acknowledged by:

The student participants of the 18th AUN and 7th ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers' Contest