

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON CULTURAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

WE, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Member States of ASEAN, on the occasion of the 10th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA) on 27 October 2022, held online and in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

REAFFIRMING our commitment to safeguard Southeast Asia's shared heritage, combat the illicit trade in cultural property, and build a responsible art market, all pursuant to ASEAN's broader goal of maintaining and enhancing peace, security, and stability in the region;

GUIDED by the 2000 ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage; the 2016 ASEAN Vientiane Resolution; the 2017 ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society; and the 2020 Narrative on ASEAN Identity;

COGNISANT that the illicit trade in cultural property is harming local communities, disrupting the historical record, defrauding consumers, and has the propensity to fuel crime, armed conflict, and violence;

RECOGNIZING that this illicit trade is a serious transnational crime, which is not just a threat to Southeast Asia's rich heritage, but to legitimate markets, cultural rights, local communities, national economies, and regional security;

APPRECIATING the artistic, historical, and religious value of the cultural heritage now targeted by looters and traffickers, the central role this patrimony plays in driving economic growth, sustainable development, and responsible tourism, as well as its power to unite people across borders, languages, and faiths;

ASPIRING towards a future where Southeast Asia's rich past is preserved for the next generation, not stolen and sold to the highest bidder;

HEREBY DECLARE TO work together through the following measures:

ADVANCE a long-term, regional strategy that addresses the root causes of the illicit trade in cultural property;

CONTINUE to reaffirm and strengthen existing ASEAN commitments to protect and promote ASEAN identity and conserve ASEAN cultural properties;

PRESERVE the interests of the individual Member States and Southeast Asia as a whole in the wider international community;

ENDORSE best practices at the Member State level;

ENCOURAGE all Member States to consider expanding the possibility to ratify or implement the relevant regional and international agreements related to the protection of cultural property against looting, illicit import, export, and transfer of ownership, while exploring how to best fill the gaps in this legal and regulatory framework in accordance with their respective national laws and regulations;

STRENGTHEN cross-sectoral coordination and information sharing among individual Member States, within ASEAN, and between ASEAN and its dialogue partners, intergovernmental organizations, and private stakeholders;

SUPPORT communities and Member States in crisis through on-the-ground initiatives, trainings and other capacity building mechanisms, and channeling financial mobilization from grants and investments;

EXPLORE the possibility of forming an ASEAN working group/cross-sectoral initiative to coordinate a regional response, with the goal of developing a sustainable, multi-year action plan that tackles the illicit trade from all angles;

EXPLORE the feasibility of an ASEAN Regional Centre/Center of Excellence to support policymakers and the broader international community in addressing this issue;

DEVELOP mechanisms, in line with domestic law and regulations, to reinforce responsible trade practices in the art market, as well as increase dialogue with other relevant industries (financial, technology, transportation, etc);

CALL ON ASEAN partners, other foreign governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society to strengthen their own responses to the illicit trade of cultural properties, furthering a holistic approach centered on collaboration, due diligence, and transparency; and

CONTINUE/CONSIDER to sustaining and strengthening collaborative efforts by convening the Cultural Property Protection Conference as appropriate, providing an opportunity to refine action plans, report on progress, and bring in additional partners.

ADOPTED on 27 October 2022 during the 10th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and the Arts (AMCA), online and in Vientiane, Lao PDR.