



JOINT STATEMENT OF THE TWENTY-NINTH ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC) COUNCIL

8 May 2023

1. The 29th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting was held on 8 May 2023 in Bali, Indonesia, under the ASEAN Chairmanship of Indonesia.
2. The Meeting extended full support to Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship with its theme of "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth", focusing on three priorities which are (i) ASEAN Matters; (ii) Epicentrum of Growth; and (iii) Implementation of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The Meeting looked forward to the realisation of the priorities, particularly those under purview of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar, including strengthening regional health architecture; empowering villages to enable them to fast-track rural development in the region; promoting environmental cooperation to conserve biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of climate change; better protecting ASEAN migrant workers and enhancing capacity of workers for the Future of Work; as well as strengthening disability-inclusive development.
3. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the progress of implementation of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 and various declarations under the ASCC Pillar. As the ASCC Blueprint 2025 approaches the end-term of its implementation, the Meeting encouraged ASCC Sectoral Bodies, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, to fully implement their respective sectoral work plans in alignment with the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.
4. The Meeting looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on One Health Initiative at the 42nd ASEAN Summit, which reaffirms ASEAN's commitment for a more effective prevention, preparedness, and response towards health emergencies. The Meeting underlined the need to finalise the establishment agreement of ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) and in parallel proceed with the preparation of its setting-up to ensure its appropriate operationalisation. The Meeting also noted the forthcoming proposed initiatives on the ASEAN Universal Verification Mechanism (AUVM), Federated Public Trust Directory in ASEAN; ASEAN health sector's database and website; ASEAN Center for Research and Development of Vaccines, Therapeutic and Diagnostic; and collaboration between finance and health authorities to strengthen regional health capacity through among others, the utilization of the existing COVID-19 and Other Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases ASEAN Response Fund.

5. The Meeting underlined the importance of continued empowerment of people in rural areas to support sustainable development as well as poverty eradication in the ASEAN region. The Meeting supported the proposed establishment of the ASEAN Villages Network (AVN) which is envisaged to be an open, inclusive, independent and bottom-up network of villages, village groups and village associations/communities across ASEAN Member States. With the aim to strengthen village-to-village networking across ASEAN, the Meeting also looked forward to potential collaboration with ASEAN External Partners and private sectors to fast-track rural development under the AVN. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the ASEAN Leaders' Joint Statement on the Establishment of an ASEAN Villages Network for adoption at the 42nd ASEAN Summit. The meeting also appreciated Indonesia's initiative to hold the ASCC Knowledge Forum: Addressing Gaps and Rethinking Pathways to Eradicate Poverty in ASEAN on May 7, 2023 in Bali, Indonesia.
6. The Meeting commended ASCC Sectoral Bodies' efforts in strengthening protection for ASEAN peoples and looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations and ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers by the ASEAN Leaders at the 42nd ASEAN Summit. The Meeting also looked forward to the ongoing development of the ASEAN Guidelines on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations; ASEAN Guidelines on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers; ASEAN Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits for Migrant Workers; and ASEAN Guiding Document to Implement ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Competitiveness, Resilience and Agility of Workers for the Future of Work.
7. The meeting noted the ongoing efforts in ASEAN's commitment to address climate change and transboundary haze pollution. The Meeting also welcomed the activities on strengthening disaster resilience in line with the implementation of the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), including the review of financial rules of ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund and the role of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC), conducting of ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform (ADRP) Meetings and ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum (ADRF).
8. Following the decision by the ASEAN Leaders at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits on 11 November 2022 to in-principle admit Timor-Leste to be the 11th member of ASEAN with observer status, the Meeting expressed support for Timor-Leste's ongoing preparations to join ASEAN and commended Timor-Leste's participation to the 29th ASCC Council Meeting as an observer. The Meeting urged the ASCC Pillar to strengthen coordination with the ASCC-related sectoral bodies and line agencies of Timor-Leste, and continue to invite Timor-Leste to observe ASEAN meetings in addition to participation in non-policy-making activities under the ASCC Pillar for capacity building purposes. The Meeting also welcomed initiatives from ASEAN Member States in supporting Timor-Leste application membership to ASEAN, among others through Indonesia's internship program in 2023 for Timor-Leste government officials in all three ASEAN Pillars. The Meeting

likewise noted the draft Roadmap for Timor-Leste's Full Membership to ASEAN that was deliberated by the SOCA and further considered at the 16th Meeting of the ASEAN Coordination Council Working Group (ACCWG).

9. Recognising the priority of preparing youth to address future challenges in ASEAN and acknowledging their pivotal role in regional development, the Meeting looked forward to the recommendations that will be conveyed at the ASEAN Leaders' Interface with Representative of ASEAN Youth during the 42nd ASEAN Summit. The Meeting also commended the successful convening of the ASEAN Youth Dialogue (AYD) 2023 on Digitalisation for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 11-13 April 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia, to engage youths on their role in making the region an epicentrum of digital development for SDGs and in promoting inclusive, equitable, and sustainable growth in the region. The Meeting further noted, the capacity-building under the name of ASEAN Digital Champion was held as part of the AYD to equip the participants with knowledge and basic skills to develop their community-based programs in their respective country. The Meeting also welcomed the convening of the 'ASEAN Youth Interfaith Camp' in October 2023 for the youth to learn firsthand about diversity in ASEAN.
10. Acknowledging women's vital roles in ensuring inclusive and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, the Meeting looked forward to the implementation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (AGSMF) to raise awareness and build ownership for the gender mainstreaming agenda across the ASEAN Community. The Meeting welcomed several flagship events, such as the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Conference; Study Visit to a Women and Children Friendly Village; and High-Level Dialogue on Women, Peace, and Security in July 2023.
11. Emphasising the great significance of continued efforts in strengthening ASEAN Identity through fostering a Culture of Prevention (CoP) that promotes our shared values of tolerance and respect for diversity, the Meeting appreciated activities related to implementing the CoP. The Meeting also noted the *Strategy Playbook on Promoting an Adaptive ASEAN Community of Greater Understanding, Tolerance and a Sense of Regional Agendas among the Peoples of ASEAN*. In this regard the Meeting welcomed the ASEAN Conference on Shared Civilizational Values in 2023, hosted by Indonesia.
12. The Meeting discuss strategic direction of ASEAN as the Epicentrum of Growth and ASCC Post-2025 Vision towards ASEAN 2045 and shared views on the need to continue engaging civil society and vulnerable groups; strengthen people-to-people ties and ASEAN Identity; youth empowerment; strengthening regional health architecture; as well as emphasize cross-sectoral and cross-pillar perspective in addressing future issues, among others.
13. The Meeting conveyed deep appreciation to Indonesia for the effective Chairmanship and excellent arrangements for the 29th ASCC Council Meeting, and looked forward to the 30th ASCC Council Meeting in August 2023.
