



LEADERS' STATEMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASEAN DIGITAL ECONOMY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT (DEFA)

WE, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely 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, gathered on 5 September 2023 in Jakarta, on the occasion of the 43rd ASEAN Summit;

REITERATING our agreement conveyed in the 2021 ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Advancing Digital Transformation in ASEAN to strengthen regional digital integration and transformation towards a coherent, harmonised, and rules-based approach to ASEAN's cooperation in the digital ecosystem;

RECALLING the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap adopted by the ASEAN Economic Ministers in 2021 which stipulates the commitment to work towards the adoption of the ASEAN DEFA that would establish an open, secure, interoperable, competitive and inclusive regional digital economy;

ALSO RECALLING the importance of a digitally inclusive society in ASEAN in designing relevant digital solutions and unlocking the full benefits of digital transformation to improve the productivity and the lives of the people and eventually boost the ASEAN economic growth as recognised in the Boracay Digital Declaration adopted by the ASEAN Digital Ministers in 2023.

FURTHER RECALLING the ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025 which envisions ASEAN as a leading digital community and economic bloc, powered by secure and transformative digital services, technologies and ecosystem and;

EMPHASISING that accelerating inclusive digital transformation is one of the broad strategies in the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework;

CONSIDERING the recommendations from the study commissioned by the ASEAN Economic Ministers on the ASEAN DEFA;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of ASEAN Centrality and proactiveness in establishing an open and rules-based leading regional digital economy that is globally competitive, interoperable, and internally connected and inclusive;

AGREEING that the differing levels of digital economy development within and

among ASEAN Member States further emphasise the compelling need for broader and deeper cooperation to address digital gaps and maximise the region's potential in harnessing the opportunities in digital economy;

HIGHLIGHTING Indonesia's 2023 Chairmanship's theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth", which underscores ASEAN's commitment to remain resilient, effective, and responsive to future regional and global challenges, and redouble efforts to secure ASEAN's position as the center of economic growth in the world.

DO HEREBY AGREE TO:

DEVELOP a modern, comprehensive, and coherent digital transformation strategy towards an ASEAN Digital Economy, where the seamless and secure flow of goods, services, and data is underpinned by enabling rules, regulation, infrastructure, and talent.

LEVERAGE the immense potential of a competitive and thriving digital economy in attracting investment, stimulating innovation, boosting private sector productivity, empowering and connecting MSMEs to regional and global markets, developing skills and generating quality employment including for women, youth, and the rural communities, and strengthening collective and individual economic competitiveness and resilience.

ACCELERATE ASEAN's digital transformation to support an inclusive and robust recovery and contribute to resilient and sustainable economic growth in the region that can withstand present and future uncertainties and position ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth in the global economy.

ACKNOWLEDGE the Framework for Negotiating the ASEAN DEFA as endorsed by the ASEAN Economic Community Council at their 23rd Meeting on 3 September 2023, which appears as **ANNEX 1**.

WELCOME the launch of ASEAN DEFA negotiations in 2023 and aim for the completion by the end of 2025 based on the endorsed Framework for Negotiating the ASEAN DEFA.

Adopted on this Fifth Day of September in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Three in a single original copy in the English Language.
