



## **ASEAN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI**

**WE**, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as “ASEAN”), namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam,

**REFLECT** on the tragic devastations and loss of lives caused by a catastrophic and unprecedented magnitude 9.1 earthquake occurring in the Indian Ocean subduction zone, triggering a massive tsunami that took place 20 years ago on 26 December 2004, affecting Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, amongst others. The Indian Ocean tsunami claimed more than two hundred thousand human fatalities, half a million survivors were internally displaced, and caused unprecedented destruction, damages and hundreds of thousands lost their livelihoods;

**HONOUR** the unwavering spirit of the survivors who with courage, determination, and hard work were able to rebuild their lives in the face of unimaginable hardship. Their plight serves as a beacon of hope and a testament to the strength of humanity; human spirit and provides inspiration to us all to persevere in the face of adversity.

**RECALL** the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster adopted at the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami on 6 January 2005, which calls for mobilisation of resources to meet the emergency relief needs of victims in the affected countries and the national rehabilitation and reconstruction programs, with support from the international community. The Declaration also called for the establishment of regional mechanisms on disaster prevention and mitigation, formation of the ASEAN Disaster Information Sharing and Communication Network, and development of a regional instrument on disaster management and emergency response;

**APPLAUD** the momentum that has been made by ASEAN following the Declaration of 6 January 2005 that has been crucial in improving the resiliency of the region against catastrophic disasters;

**COMMEND** the governments of the affected countries for their steadfast dedication to their people. Their commitment and leadership to facilitate recovery and rehabilitation efforts to support communities and rebuild lives, and using this tragedy as a catalyst for change has been truly remarkable;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the invaluable support provided by ASEAN Member States, other governments and donor countries, international, regional and local organisations, businesses, and countless individuals from around the world. This international collaboration was crucial in ensuring critical resources were available to support the recovery process, demonstrating the power of unity in the face of disaster. The "Build Back Better" principle seeks to ensure that every reconstruction effort shall

integrate the concept of disaster risk reduction that would help reduce future disaster risk and build resilience;

**REAFFIRM** the commitment made by ASEAN Member States through the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) signed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 26 July 2005, to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of the countries in the region, and to jointly respond to disaster emergencies through concerted national efforts and regional and international cooperation. The AADMER was signed in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami and paved the way for the region to work together to prevent the reoccurrence of a similar tragedy;

**COMMEND** the achievements made by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM) and the ASEAN Committee in Disaster Management (ACDM) in implementing AADMER, particularly through the development of the five-year-cycle AADMER Work Programme to ensure its implementation, the creation of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund, the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) as the operational engine of AADMER, and the signing of the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region (OAOR). This is further supported by the development of important operational framework such as Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP), the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) and the ASEAN Disaster Response and Monitoring System

(DMRS), amongst others. In addition, ASEAN has developed a stronger multi-sectoral coordination mechanism through the establishment of the Technical Working Group on Civil-Military Coordination, the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Platform (ADRP) and the ASEAN Disaster Resilience Forum (ADRF). Furthermore, the Secretary-General of ASEAN plays an important role in regional resilience through the role of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC). These mechanisms have made the region inherently stronger and more resilient against disasters;

**COMMIT** to further strengthen the regional disaster management tools and mechanisms in all phases of disaster management, including through the implementation of the ASEAN Leaders Declaration on Sustainable resilience and to enhance prevention and mitigation efforts, a comprehensive regional early warning system delivering Early Warning for All should be developed and public awareness campaigns on disaster risk information must be continued. Strengthening preparedness for catastrophic disasters necessitates the full implementation of the revised Financial Rules of the ADMER Fund that enables public and private contributions to disaster relief and emergency response, while also strengthening the role of the SG-AHAC in coordinating response and recovery efforts. Finally, to enhance ASEAN's global leadership in disaster management, investment in human resource development through training exercises and capacity building activities alongside continued development of the regional disaster information repository and databases is essential;

**ARE DETERMINED** to build a more resilient ASEAN that is prepared to face future disasters with unity, strength, compassion, and a commitment to inclusive and sustainable disaster recovery, among others by implementing the ASEAN

Leaders Declaration on Sustainable Resilience. Let the memory of the Indian Ocean tsunami twenty years ago serve as a constant reminder of our shared vulnerability and our unwavering commitment to protect our communities and people, and build a safer future for all.

**ADOPTED** through ad-referendum by the ASEAN Ministers-in-Charge of Disaster Management on 23 September 2024 and to be launched at 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.