ADOPTED

ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening ASEAN Cooperation for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam, gathered on the occasion of the 49th ASEAN Summit on 15 November 2026;

RECALLING the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and our aspiration to build a resilient, innovative, dynamic and people-centered ASEAN Community, with micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) serving as key drivers of economic growth, employment and regional integration;

RECOGNIZING that MSMEs account for a vast majority of enterprises across the region and play a critical role in advancing an inclusive, innovative and competitive business environment, strengthening participation in regional and global value chains, and narrowing development gaps;

NOTING that the dynamic and rapidly-evolving global economic landscape characterized by supply chain reconfigurations, technological transformation, climate change and green transition, and emerging economic security challenges require a more innovative, coordinated, and forward-looking approach to MSME development in the region;

RECALLING the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development 2026-2030 (SAP MSMED 2030) and the initiatives provided for therein, including the ASEAN SME Academy, ASEAN Access and the ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network;

ACKNOWLEDGING the valuable contributions of existing ASEAN initiatives, platforms, mechanisms, and other sectoral initiatives in strengthening MSME capacity, facilitating access to markets and business networks, promoting digitalization and innovation, advancing inclusive entrepreneurship, and supporting the transition towards sustainable business practices;

RECOGNIZING the importance of assessing existing ASEAN mechanisms, initiatives and platforms supporting MSME development, drawing on existing knowledge, identifying

institutional and operational gaps, and strengthening coordination among existing mechanisms and initiatives, to inform the exploration of options for enhancing regional coordination, knowledge-sharing, policy innovation and implementation support, including through the further strengthening of existing initiatives and platforms, before considering the need for any new institutional arrangement, which may, where appropriate, take the form of a complementary regional mechanism that builds on existing initiatives, to facilitate MSMEs' participation in and benefits from ASEAN Community-building efforts;

NOTING the ongoing Feasibility and Scoping Study on the ASEAN Centre of Excellence for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACE-MSMEs), which will examine its potential role, functions and appropriate modality, taking into account existing ASEAN initiatives and mechanisms;

DO HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. **AGREE** to consider the findings and recommendations of the Feasibility and Scoping Study on the ACE-MSMEs and determine the appropriate way forward, including options to complement and strengthen ASEAN's existing initiatives and platforms for MSME development;

2. **FURTHER AGREE** that any subsequent steps concerning the ACE-MSMEs, including the strengthening of existing ASEAN mechanisms, will be guided by the findings and recommendations of the Feasibility and Scoping Study and further consideration by Member States through the appropriate ASEAN processes;

3. **TASK** the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), through the Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM) and the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) to:

    (i) consider options for an interim virtual regional arrangement, building on existing ASEAN MSME platforms, through which ASEAN Member States could, among others:

        (a) coordinate with and support existing ASEAN MSME initiatives and platforms, in accordance with their respective mandates and governance arrangements under the ACCMSME;
        (b) improve the visibility of, and access to, ASEAN's existing MSME knowledge resources;
        (c) coordinate technical assistance and capacity-building activities;
        (d) mobilize partnerships with Dialogue and Development Partners, international organizations, the academia and the private sector; and
        (e) carry out preparatory work for the ACE-MSMEs, should Member States decide to establish it;

    (ii) prepare a roadmap of options for further consideration by Member States, based on the findings and recommendations of the Feasibility and Scoping Study. This includes

governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements, full life-cycle costs, potential financing sources and sustainability mechanisms as part of a progress report on ACE-MSMEs through appropriate ASEAN mechanisms.

Any new arrangements, including the interim virtual regional arrangement, shall be subject to Member States' agreement and supported by a clearly defined mandate and transparent governance arrangements that safeguard institutional neutrality and ensure inclusive participation and equitable access to services and opportunities for all ASEAN Member States.

Their institutional, operational and financial sustainability, including full life-cycle costs and long-term financing, shall be assessed, and adequate and sustainable financing secured, before implementation.

No new mandatory financial obligations shall arise for Member States without their separate agreement;

ADOPTED in Manila, the Philippines on this Fifteenth Day of November Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.