

# **2016 VIENTIANE DECLARATION ON TRANSITION FROM INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT TO FORMAL EMPLOYMENT TOWARDS DECENT WORK PROMOTION IN ASEAN**

*Adopted in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic on 6 September 2016*

WE, the Heads of State/Government 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 the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on the occasion of the 28th and 29th Summits in Vientiane, Lao PDR;

REAFFIRMING our continued commitment to build an ASEAN Community comprising three pillars, namely the ASEAN Political and Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community;

RECOGNISING the commitments of individual ASEAN Member States to promote inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work for all as set out in the Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in adherence to relevant international labour standards;

UNDERSTANDING that informalisation is a phenomenon where decent work deficits are more pronounced, resulting from insufficient formal employment opportunities even in countries with robust economic growth performance; and that the high rate of informal employment in the region poses a major challenge to the protection of the rights of workers and promotion of social protection and social dialogue and, therefore, to the achievement of inclusive growth and sustainable development;

RECOGNISING that a managed transition process from informal to formal employment of workers is necessary and plays an important role in enhancing the well-being of workers and their families, promoting inclusive growth, and eradicating poverty;

RECOGNISING the sovereignty of states in determining their own labour policy relating to informal employment;

ACKNOWLEDGING the diversity in factors, characteristics, and circumstances of informality in employment and different social and economic contexts of ASEAN Member States, facilitating the transition of workers from informal to formal employment may take into consideration different and multiple strategies; and that there is a need to pay special attention to those informally employed who are especially vulnerable to decent work deficits;

DO HEREBY:

STRIVE to take necessary concrete actions towards the transition from informal employment to formal employment in ASEAN Member States consistent with each ASEAN Member State's national legislation, policies and programmes:

1. Promote the elimination of forced labour, child labour, violence at the workplace and all forms of discrimination, including gender inequality;

2. Promote joint work and sharing of best practices and methodologies among ASEAN Member States and possibly with Dialogue Partners in assessing the factors, characteristics and circumstances of informality in employment in the national contexts as inputs to the design and implementation of laws, policies and other measures aiming to facilitate the transition from informal employment to formal employment in all economic sectors, especially in rural areas;
3. Foster research and information sharing among ASEAN Member States on best practices in promoting the transition from informal employment to formal employment towards achieving decent work that promotes employment creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue;
4. Develop capacity and share best practices in common areas of interest especially concerning strategies on employment promotion, skills development, and labour protection, such as public employment programmes, responsive labour advisory and inspection strategies, wage policies, and social protection;
5. Take appropriate measures at the national level to promote wide access to decent jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities, skills development, decent work conditions, and income security that would contribute to equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth in ASEAN;
6. Strengthen human resources development policies and programmes to promote access to and quality of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), skills development, and lifelong learning, especially for those in rural areas, which would generate greater employment and contribute to the transition from informal employment to formal employment;
7. Integrate labour matters into national policies and programmes that promote entrepreneurship, sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other forms of business models, by expanding access to information of relevant regulations, financial services and support, and market opportunities;
8. Strengthen policies and programmes, and encourage cooperation and collaboration of enterprises, self-employed workers, and cooperative units, to provide support to workers in informal employment who are vulnerable to decent work deficits and to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all; and
9. Encourage the participation of employers' organisations and workers' organisations in facilitating the transition from informal employment to formal employment.

WE TASK the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM), with the support of the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM), and other relevant ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies to take necessary efforts to implement this Declaration, including mobilising appropriate resources.

ADOPTED in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, this 6th day of September in the Year Two Thousand and Sixteen, in a single original copy, in the English language.