

2019 DECLARATION ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM ALL FORMS OF ONLINE EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN ASEAN

Adopted in Bangkok, Thailand on 2 November 2019

WE, the Heads of State/Government of 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 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 35th ASEAN Summit;

UPHOLDING ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and guided by the Blueprints of the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 27th ASEAN Summit in 2015;

REAFFIRMING the goals and commitments of ASEAN to eliminate violence against children as reflected in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN (2013); and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Children (2015);

FURTHER REAFFIRMING the importance and general principles of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD (2012); the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2015); the Declaration on the Commitments for Children in ASEAN (2001); the ASEAN Tourism Agreement (2002); the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children (2010); and the Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society (2017);

ACKNOWLEDGING that all ASEAN Member States are Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and that the CRC emphasizes the principles of non-discrimination; child protection the right to life, survival, and development; the best interests of the child; and respect for the child’s views;

RECALLING the commitment of ASEAN Member States to leave no one behind by implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) of which Goal 5.2 is to “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation” and Goal 16.2 is to “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children” by the year 2030;

HIGHLIGHTING that the rapid advances in and proliferation of Internet and evolving communications technologies have led to the emergence of unforeseen and unintended consequences that put children’s safety at risk and will likely continue to do so;

CONCERNED by the ongoing and emerging global threats that are making more children vulnerable to the borderless nature of the production and sharing of online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) or any other forms of online child exploitation, which require increasing awareness of the rights holders (children) and duty-bearers (parents, communities, private sector and policymakers, among others) and strengthening of child protection systems;

WE HEREBY COMMIT to further protect children from all forms of online exploitation and abuse, prioritising the following measures:

- A. **Promote, develop, and implement comprehensive national legal frameworks in each ASEAN Member State and work towards improving child protection standards and policies on all forms of online exploitation and abuse across ASEAN Member States;**
- B. **Enhance law enforcement**, judicial and legal professional capabilities through regular, relevant and updated trainings and sharing and exchange of best practices in the protection of children against all forms of online exploitation and abuse;
- C. **Encourage the establishment of a national specialised unit with an explicit remit to lead, support and coordinate investigations;**
- D. **Increase effectiveness of rights-based and gender-responsive child protection and support services, social welfare programmes;**
- E. **Strengthen data collection and monitoring, reporting and referral mechanisms**, through hotlines to report online materials suspected to be illegal, including child sexual abuse material;
- F. **Promote a national education programme and school curricula to raise awareness of sexual, and other forms of exploitation of children** to empower children, young people, parents, guardians, caregivers, practitioners and community;
- G. **Mobilise and enhance engagement with the private sector and other relevant** stakeholders to actively involve them in monitoring prevention and response measures through regulations, corporate social responsibility, and collaboration for the development of effective measures to detect, take down and report illegal content related to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

WE ENCOURAGE relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in the three ASEAN Community Pillars to promote the implementation of this Declaration, and task the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) with the support of Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) to review, coordinate, monitor and report its progress and develop a standard and practical guideline for the implementation of the above measures (appropriate instruments, actions and universally agreed terminology, among others) with the support of ASEAN Member States.

ADOPTED in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand on this Second Day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Nineteen, in a single original copy, in the English Language.