

2016 ASEAN PLUS THREE LEADERS' STATEMENT ON PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Adopted in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 7 September 2016

We, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) and the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, gathered during the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Summit held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 7 September 2016;

NOTING with satisfaction the progress made in ASEAN Plus Three cooperation in all sectors over the past 18 years and reiterating our commitments to further enhancing and expanding cooperation in the future;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted on 25 September 2015 in United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in New York, the Paris Agreement, adopted at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, France within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and rendering our concerted efforts to fulfill the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) over the next decades in ASEAN Plus Three cooperation framework;

RECOGNISING the significance of sustainable development in securing a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community as envisioned in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, guided by the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter, which will serve as a solid foundation for enduring peace, stability and prosperity in the region;

UNDERLINING the complementarity between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to uplift the living standards of our people, while leaving no one behind;

CALLING ON all the countries to take comprehensive, expeditious and concrete actions to advance the implementation of SDGs in the spirit of equality, cooperation and inclusiveness, as well as to strengthen regional and international partnership in the implementation process;

DO HEREBY DECLARE to embark on a course of equitable, inclusive, open, all-round and innovation-driven development in the interest of advancing sustainable development of all ASEAN and the Plus Three Countries, and to take concrete actions as follows:

A. To reduce poverty and narrow the development gap within and between countries:

- To provide necessary support for ASEAN to narrow the development gap and accelerate economic integration among its member states through the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan II and its successor documents, focusing on the development of human capital, the sharing of lessons learned, and the formulation of appropriate policy responses;
- To promote exchange and cooperation among relevant authorities and stakeholders in implementing poverty alleviation programmes in ASEAN and the Plus Three Countries;
- To facilitate poverty reduction cooperation through policy dialogues, mutual visits of personnel, capacity building programmes, information exchanges and joint studies;
- To support rural and community development by encouraging relevant agencies to conduct information and expertise exchanges, capacity building activities and pilot projects in land use, planning, development and management;

- To promote greater protection of the environment, addressing the challenge of climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources;
- To promote equal opportunities to quality education and employment and encourage regional cooperation on human resources development in all areas;
- To promote greater access to basic social services for all such as health services and enhanced cooperation in the areas of social protection and universal health coverage;
- To promote trade openness in ASEAN Plus Three countries, supported by appropriate regulatory reforms, capacity building, technical assistance, social protection and infrastructure development to contribute to poverty reduction and narrowing the development gap;
- To support the most vulnerable in ASEAN with economic assistance from Plus Three countries to harmonize regional development;
- To strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat as a regional surveillance capacity to monitor ASEAN Plus Three development achievement and to act as an advocate at the regional level to influence the allocation of development cooperation.

B. To promote sustainable development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

- To support the implementation of the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan for SME Development (2016-2025), including sharing of best practices, experiences, on the development of MSMEs as well as convening of capacity building programmes, seminars, workshops, and symposiums;
- To strengthen policy consultations and exchange of expertise between the concerned authorities, including relevant stakeholders on MSMEs and MSMEs cooperation;
- To strengthen cooperation in traditional areas, including trade, agriculture and tourism, and explore relevant new areas of cooperation conducive to economic growth such as environment, energy, digital economy, human resource development, education, science and technology;
- To empower MSMEs through better access to financing and markets as well as other relevant means of support.

C. To promote sustainable tourism cooperation

- Reaffirm our commitment to strengthen and broaden the efforts in paving the way towards sustainability of tourism growth and cooperation in accordance with the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Governments of the Member States of ASEAN and the Government of the Plus Three Countries on Strengthening Tourism Cooperation which was signed on 22 January 2016 in Manila, the Philippines with an innovative and holistic approach;
- Enhance cooperation in the purpose of developing quality, responsible, sustainable, accessible, inclusive and balanced tourism, including preservation of attraction sites, cultural heritage and its surrounding environment, as well as development, promotion, diversification and marketing of tourism products in order to contribute to sustainable development in the region;
- Establish and improve information sharing mechanisms on tourism statistics and strategic planning, investment opportunities, economic data and tourism-related risk management, as well as the involvement of private sector in tourism in the region;
- Enhance cooperation in tourism education, capacity building and personnel training to better support quality, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism;

- Acknowledge the importance of media and joint expo in promoting tourism cooperation and carry out more exchange projects among media agencies and journalists among ASEAN Plus Three Countries;
- Improve and expand connectivity and upgrade tourism-related infrastructure and services, taking into account accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- Take effective measures to attract new and additional resources for tourism investment.

D. To enhance cultural exchange and cooperation

- To encourage and support cooperation among the departments of the ASEAN Plus Three Countries in charge of historical relics, archaeology and cultural heritage preservation, museums, archives, libraries and cultural institutions;
- To promote the exchange of experts and expertise in culture, traditional and contemporary art and heritage preservation activities of ASEAN Plus Three countries;
- To strengthen cooperation among the ASEAN Plus Three countries on human resource development and training in the cultural field, including through the exchange of experiences on the hosting of large-scale cultural activities.

Adopted by the Heads of State/Government of the ASEAN Plus Three Countries at the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Summit held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 7 September 2016.