

**2020 ASEAN LEADERS' VISION STATEMENT  
ON A COHESIVE AND RESPONSIVE ASEAN: RISING ABOVE  
CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINING GROWTH**

*Adopted on 26 June 2020*

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## 2020 ASEAN LEADERS' VISION STATEMENT ON A COHESIVE AND RESPONSIVE ASEAN: RISING ABOVE CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINING GROWTH

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We, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (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:

**RECALLING** the need to strengthen existing bonds of regional solidarity to realise an ASEAN Community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible in order to effectively respond to current and future challenges and opportunities as stipulated in the ASEAN Charter;

**REAFFIRMING** the importance of building a peaceful, stable, rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred and resilient ASEAN Community with enhanced capacity to seize opportunities and respond effectively to challenges as stated in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025;

**NOTING** with satisfaction the significant progress made in the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 through the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprints, as well as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025;

**RECOGNISING** the opportunities and challenges presented by rapidly-changing geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes, on-going complex traditional and non-traditional security challenges, swift development of science and technology, and social and economic ramifications of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, including disrupted production and supply chains, demand shocks, decreased trade and investment, financial vulnerabilities, high unemployment, growing inequality, and access to fewer resources and opportunities for vulnerable groups;

**RECALLING** the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 that demonstrated our collective will and shared commitment to strengthen solidarity, enhance cooperation and mutual support among ASEAN Member States, with our external partners and the international community in the fight against COVID-19, as well as mitigate the multi-faceted impact of the pandemic while working towards a comprehensive post-pandemic recovery plan for ASEAN;

**CONVINCED** of the need to realise a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN, build on ASEAN's achievements, maintain ASEAN's unity and centrality, enhance ASEAN's capacity to harness the opportunities brought about by the digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in effectively responding to emerging challenges and opportunities, and chart a sustainable and resilient development path for the ASEAN Community;

**UNDERSTANDING** that the concepts of "cohesiveness" and "responsiveness" are interrelated and mutually-reinforcing in a way that a cohesive ASEAN can respond in an effective and timely manner to any challenges, whereas a responsive ASEAN would further strengthen its cohesion;

### **DO HEREBY AGREE TO:**

1. **REAFFIRM** our strong commitment to the effective implementation and timely realisation of the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, stressing the importance of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ASEAN Community Blueprints 2025 to help address outstanding issues and move the regional integration process forward taking into account the changing dynamics of the regional and global landscape;

2. **SUSTAIN** the momentum of ASEAN Community-building and be forward-looking in charting the continuing development of ASEAN beyond 2025;
3. **STRENGTHEN** ASEAN's institutional capacity by improving and harmonising ASEAN work processes and coordination, as well as the efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of ASEAN Organs and Bodies while strengthening ASEAN-led mechanisms;

## **A COHESIVE ASEAN COMMUNITY THAT IS UNITED, PEACEFUL, INTEGRATED AND RESILIENT**

4. **Strengthen** ASEAN unity, solidarity and centrality by promoting lasting peace, security and stability, sustainable development and inclusive economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress in the region;
5. **Emphasise** the importance of mutual trust and confidence, enhanced dialogue and cooperation in inter-state relations, and a multilateral approach in addressing emerging challenges; actively contribute to constructive efforts in shaping a more effective multilateral architecture that is capable of tackling pressing common regional and global issues; support for a rules- based regional and international order, anchored in international law.
6. **Strengthen** mutual support and collaboration among ASEAN Member States, where people think and act as a community, the spirit of "unity in diversity" is respected and the principles of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit are observed;
7. **Adhere** to ASEAN's fundamental principles, shared values and norms, as stipulated in the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, upholding international law, and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes without resorting to threat or use of force, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) while continuing to enhance mutual trust and confidence;
8. **Advance** practical defence cooperation among ASEAN Member States and between ASEAN and its external partners under the frameworks of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) including strengthening the ADMM-Plus as it commemorates its 10th anniversary.
9. **Continue** to strengthen the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) by promoting confidence building measures and preventive diplomacy while enhancing mutual understanding and trust, as well as transparency in the region, and by supporting political-security dialogue and cooperation, so that it remains relevant and responsive in addressing emerging security challenges;
10. **Intensify** maritime cooperation in promoting maritime security, safety and freedom of navigation and over-flight, addressing transnational crime at sea, creating conducive environment for peaceful settlement of disputes, ensuring maritime sustainability, providing humanitarian assistance to persons and vessels in distress at sea, combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, promoting maritime connectivity and commerce, strengthening maritime scientific research, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, the relevant Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the relevant instruments and conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). To this end, strengthen coordination and synergy across maritime-related ASEAN mechanisms, including enhancing the role of the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF);
11. **Reaffirm** the objectives and principles of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo- Pacific (AOIP) which provides a guide for ASEAN's engagement in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions, while encouraging external partners to work with ASEAN in promoting the principles laid out in the AOIP and to undertake cooperation on the four key areas identified in the Outlook to promote mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit through ASEAN-led mechanisms.

12. **Further reaffirm** the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation and over-flight above the South China Sea, as well as upholding international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, in the South China Sea, work actively towards the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS. Further stress on the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability, and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation. Pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, while enhancing mutual trust and confidence;
13. **Commit** to build a highly integrated, cohesive, innovative and resilient ASEAN Economic Community with seamless movement of goods, services, investment, capital, and skilled labour; promote inter-operable payment systems; encourage Member States to increase efforts in finding innovative solutions to boost intra-ASEAN trade and investment, through the progressive reduction or elimination of restrictions, including addressing the trade barrier effects of non-tariff measures amongst others, with a view to reaching the target of doubling intra-ASEAN trade by 2025; sustaining the continued flow of investments into the region; deepen and expand economic cooperation with all partners, with emphasis on ASEAN's free trade area (FTA) partners, to support economic integration in the region;
14. **Further strengthen** efforts to bridge the digital divide and grow the digital economy by promoting enabling environments, including through the establishment of digital transformation frameworks to facilitate digital trade and enhancement in digital connectivity;
15. **Reaffirm** strong commitment to alleviate the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our people's livelihood, societies and economies, through the implementation of a comprehensive recovery plan with a view to improving stability and resilience of the regional economy, preserving supply chain connectivity, while staying vigilant of a second wave of infections.
  - **Undertake** necessary measures for gradual revitalisation of ASEAN's economic activities to implement facilitative measures and to expedite recovery of the ASEAN economies;
  - **Strengthen** resilience of the ASEAN economies to make them sustainable and less vulnerable to future shocks; stabilising manufacturing, promoting complementarities in the regional supply chain through technology exchange, and ensuring food security and energy security.
  - **Duly** address disruptions in trade links, promote and support regional and global supply chain connectivity and ensure unimpeded flow of essential goods including medicine, medical supplies and devices and other critical goods and services in supply chains through increased transparency and refraining from imposing unnecessary non-tariff measures during the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - **Encourage** the maintenance of necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating to the extent possible the essential movement of people, including business travels, while ensuring the safeguarding of public health in line with our efforts to combat the pandemic;
  - **Cushion** shocks, particularly to vulnerable economic sectors and businesses, including the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), startups and enterprises in the informal economy, shoring up business viability through tax relief, credit and corporate support; promote business opportunities and facilitating the possible shifting of production business models;
  - **Restore** a conducive business environment and reinvigorate productivity growth; diversifying the economy and encouraging structural transformation; promoting consumer confidence, stimulate demand; ensuring markets remain open while keeping consumption disruptions to a minimum;

- **Tackle** the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19, including continued access to education, support workers in the sectors affected, address employment and unemployment issues during the time of unprecedented crisis, upskill and reskill existing workforce, and promote social protection while promoting demand-led employment strategy;
  - **Continue** to promote and accelerate trade facilitation efforts including addressing non-tariff measures, building upon existing trade facilitating platforms in ASEAN, streamlining of processes, implementation of programmes or policies to support manufacturers, exporters, importers, traders, and suppliers;
  - **Promote** efforts involving stakeholders' participation to boost the image of ASEAN as a trusted trade and investment hub and an attractive tourism destination;
16. **Dedicate** utmost efforts to conclude a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement and its signing in 2020; demonstrating the firm commitment of ASEAN and its partners to upholding an open, inclusive and rules-based multi-lateral trading system;
  17. **Continue** to promote sustainable development cooperation by promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which was adopted in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025, and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Complementarities Initiative), including through the effective realisation of the Complementarities Roadmap, at a time of significance to both ASEAN and the United Nations as the year 2020 marks the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the ASEAN Community, and the fifth year of implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
  18. **Underline** the importance of narrowing the development gap within ASEAN through effective implementation of the IAI Work Plan III and successor documents, and the development of links with other regional initiatives, including through promoting rural development and poverty eradication, with a view to ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth of the ASEAN Community.
  19. **Further** promote equitable development across the ASEAN Community by aligning sub-regional growth, including in the Mekong area such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), and the Singapore-Johor-Riau (SIJORI) Growth Triangle with the comprehensive development of ASEAN.
  20. **Enhance** effective implementation of the MPAC 2025 and synergise MPAC 2025 with various key connectivity strategies and initiatives, including through the Connecting the Connectivities approach, within and beyond ASEAN, towards achieving a seamlessly and comprehensively connected and integrated ASEAN;
  21. **Continue** to promote a sense of belonging in the ASEAN Community and foster ASEAN identity among its peoples, including through increasing awareness of ASEAN's cultural heritage and shared values; the understanding of ASEAN's relevance through promoting cultural and people-to-people exchanges; enhancing ASEAN's visibility through, among others, tasking our officials to continue studying the proposal to promote the display of the ASEAN Flag in ASEAN Member States and the use of the ASEAN Anthem at ASEAN's official functions; and the implementation of ASEAN Lanes at international airports of ASEAN Member States.
  22. **Intensify** efforts in safeguarding public goods such as health, education, and human security; create systemic changes to policy frameworks, as necessary, to reduce inequality and provide equitable access to opportunities for all, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups, including children, women, people with disabilities, elderly people and migrant workers, in accordance with domestic laws and international obligations.

23. **Cooperate** closely in strengthening the social safety net for the peoples, preventing social disruption and instability in the unprecedented times of COVID-19, by designing and implementing risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems to reduce the vulnerabilities of at-risk populations, especially women and children and improve their overall resilience.
24. **Strengthen** an ASEAN-centred regional architecture that is open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based; strengthen ASEAN-led mechanisms, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), ARF and ADMM-Plus to maintain their relevance and active contributions to promoting dialogue, cooperation and confidence building as the EAS reaches its 15th anniversary, the ADMM-Plus marks its 10th anniversary and the ARF reaches a new cycle of cooperation.
25. **Continue** to develop friendly relations and mutually beneficial dialogue, cooperation and partnerships with countries and sub-regional, regional and international organisations and institutions.
26. **Strengthen** ASEAN institutional capacity by promoting the efficient operation of ASEAN organs, improving ASEAN work processes, and strengthening cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination; optimising the use of the ASEAN Secretariat facilities for hosting meetings; as well as continuing the review of the implementation of the ASEAN Charter to assess the organisation and functions of the ASEAN institutional structures established under the ASEAN Charter and the application of ASEAN rules and procedures that govern the operations of ASEAN.

## A RESPONSIVE ASEAN COMMUNITY IN A TRANSFORMING AND UNCERTAIN WORLD

27. **Ensure** effective and timely response to challenges and crises affecting ASEAN by, inter alia, strengthening coordination, consensus and consultation, and enhancing the role of the ASEAN Chair.
28. **Enhance** ASEAN's capacity to address transboundary issues in an effective and timely manner;
29. **Strengthen** the capacity of ASEAN and existing regional mechanisms on public health and emergencies response to optimise their operations and enhance regional preparedness and health security to quickly and effectively address rapidly evolving threats, and assess the risks of emerging, re-emerging infectious and communicable diseases, pandemics or other future public health emergencies.
  - Practical measures to be undertaken include, inter alia, promoting ASEAN Community's holistic approach on addressing public health emergencies through the enhanced work of the ASEAN Coordinating Council Working Group on Public Health Emergencies (ACCWG-PHE), utilisation of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, establishment of the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies and formulating the ASEAN Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Public Health Emergencies, coordinating cross-border public health responses, such as contact tracing and outbreak investigation, where appropriate, through existing bilateral and regional cooperation mechanisms.
  - Encouraging ways and means to mutually assist and protect the well-being and safety of our citizens in time of crisis through the operationalisation of the ASEAN Guidelines for the Provision of Emergency Assistance by ASEAN Missions in Third Countries to Nationals of ASEAN Member Countries in Crisis Situations.
  - Enhancing effective and transparent public communication, countering misinformation and fake news.

30. **Further intensify** cooperation with ASEAN's partners, as well as other regional and global entities to enhance collective response to public health emergencies including developing an expert network on public health emergencies, promoting research and development on vaccine and medicines as well as their production, when possible; mitigating the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and future pandemics including developing linkage mechanisms for manufacturers and suppliers of essential goods to ensure adequate supply, whilst sustaining supply chain connectivity, food security, through reaffirming our commitment to the readiness of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) as a reliable layer of Global Financial Safety Net, through implementing the Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, utilising the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR).
31. **Strengthen** ASEAN's capacity to address traditional and non-traditional security issues, in an effective and timely manner, including terrorism, violent extremism and transnational crimes, as well as the implementation of additional measures to respond to new emerging issues.
32. **Recognise** the growing sophistication and trans-boundary nature of cyber-threats and underline the need to address cybersecurity challenges in a holistic manner to ensure an open, secure, stable, accessible and resilient cyberspace to support the ASEAN digital economy.
33. **Strengthen** cooperation on border management in accordance with respective domestic laws and policies, to better safeguard the increasingly interconnected and integrated ASEAN Community.
34. **Further encourage** ASEAN cooperation in promoting inter-faith and cross-cultural dialogues and peacebuilding programs as a means to foster tolerance and mutual understanding and the importance of engaging in dialogues on political, economic, and socio-cultural issues in order to promote a culture of prevention for a peaceful, inclusive, resilient, healthy, and harmonious society.
35. **Continue** to mainstream human rights across the three pillars of the ASEAN Community to effectively promote and protect human rights, especially in responding to emerging threats and challenges.
36. **Enhance** the role of women of ASEAN in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and development in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 20th anniversary of the first United Nation Security Council Resolution (1325) on women, peace and security; continue to strengthen ASEAN's efforts and Member States' initiatives women empowerment and their roles in peace and security through, among others, the active work of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the ASEAN Women's Entrepreneur Network (AWEN), and ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR).
37. **Continue** to strengthen ASEAN's collective work to achieve innovative and inclusive growth, sustainable development including through ongoing initiatives such as the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), and the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation (ACAI); further cooperation in areas of sustainable finance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and environmental protection.
38. **Continue** to strengthen the cooperation addressing humanitarian aspects of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in the region through the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC).

39. **Urge** Member States to work more closely in promoting sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries to address issues of food safety, food security and agricultural productivity; continue to work towards the establishment of the ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing (AN-IUU); welcome the development of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework for the next five years, as well as strengthening our cooperation in promoting sustainable development through, among others, development of circular economy, the use of renewable energy, sustainable and integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate, sustainable management of natural resources and reduction of waste, and conservation of biodiversity.
40. **Strengthen** quality human resource development in the digital age through education and life-long learning, up-skilling, re-skilling, and new skills acquisition, and active labour market policies; welcome the issuance of an ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work; remain committed to promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and the pursuit of STEM-based entrepreneurship and remained committed to the effective implementation of the ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Action Plan 2016-2025.
41. **Recognise** emerging challenges and opportunities facing social work development due to changes from the 4IR, ageing populations, climate change, and the new normal brought about by COVID-19, among others; and enhance social welfare and social work in ASEAN including through existing initiatives such as the ASEAN Social Work Consortium (ASWC) and the ASEAN Training Centre for Social Work and Social Welfare (ATCSW).
42. **Reaffirm** ASEAN's strong support for an open, non-discriminatory, inclusive and rules-based, multilateral trading system, and commit to work closely on improving the functioning of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to enable the WTO to better meet the requirements of the changing realities of the global economic landscape, as well as remain committed to maintaining open and connected supply chains.
43. **Strengthen** ASEAN's capacity to respond to the adverse effects of climate change through the sharing of information and best practices, including from traditional knowledge, and the effective implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs);
44. **Strengthen** coordination between ASEAN Member States in disaster management through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) with concrete actions to implement the "One ASEAN, One Response", and move the implementation of ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) forward to a people-centred, people-oriented, sustainable, and networked approach by 2025.
45. **Reaffirm** ASEAN's commitment to implement the Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris and the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris; promote biodiversity conservation and mainstream biodiversity across other sectors, and strengthen regional and international cooperation in combating wildlife trafficking.
46. **Enhance** regional platforms to promote equitable opportunities, participation and effective engagement of women, children, youth, the elderly/older persons, persons with disabilities, people living in remote and border areas, and vulnerable groups in the development and implementation of ASEAN policies and programmes.
47. **Foster** an outward-looking community that deepens cooperation with Dialogue Partners, strengthen engagement with other Partners and external parties, as well as potential partners and engage them in concerted efforts to respond collectively and constructively to global developments and issues of common concern and interest.

**ADOPTED** on this Twenty-Sixth Day of June in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty, in a single original copy in the English Language.