

# 2020 ASEAN DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF ADAPTATION TO DROUGHT

*Adopted on 10 November 2020*

**WE**, the Ministers in-charge of disaster management and environment of Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), 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, of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as "ASEAN");

**GUIDED BY** the ASEAN Charter which sets out the purposes and principles of ASEAN in particular, to enhance regional resilience by promoting greater political, security, economic, and socio-cultural cooperation; and to promote sustainable development so as to ensure the protection of the region's environment, the sustainability of its natural resources, the preservation of its natural heritage, and the high quality of life of its people;

**ADHERING TO** the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 for a peaceful, stable, and resilient Community with the enhanced capacity to respond effectively to threats and challenges in the region;

**RECALLING** our commitment at the informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management on 22 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey to build our regional capacity and preparedness to address the challenges posed by drought;

**CONCERNED WITH** severe drought and its cumulative impact, especially from 2015 to 2016 and 2018 to 2020, which has had gradual but critical long-term implications on the people and the environment of the region in the social, economic, and environmental aspects such as poverty, agriculture, food security, human development outcomes, ecological integrity (e.g., environmental quality and natural resources), energy, and other economic sectors such as tourism;

**CONCERNED** that the region is facing a double burden of disasters, namely the stress and the threat of climate change and extreme weather events, as well as the impact of successive droughts compounded by the unprecedented socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the vulnerabilities of specific groups in the population, such as low-income, small holder farmers and households dependent on agricultural livelihoods, the food insecure, workers in the informal economy and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); and

**BUILDING ON** our commitment in the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management, and our commitment to implement the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) Action Plan and ASEAN Working Group on Water Resource Management (AWGWRM) Action Plan, and ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**DO HEREBY:**

**Resolve to undertake the following actions, taking into account the impact of drought on the livelihood of people, natural resources and ecosystems, agriculture, energy, and sustainable socio-economic development:**

1. Promote a longer-term, holistic, and more strategic approach including a regional framework to strengthening adaptations and mitigation to drought, based on adapting to future drought risk for short term and long-term basis in a changing climate, which includes preparedness, responses, relief, recovery measures, integrated drought management policy, strategy, and planning;
2. Strengthen coordination between ASEAN sectoral bodies to effectively address slow on-set and accumulative impact of drought on, *inter alia*, the environment, agriculture, energy, and water;
3. Further strengthen our regional cooperation and collaboration in research and innovation development (R&D) and technology transfer associated with drought such as climate change adaptation, water resource management, drought risks, preservation, conservation, and the restoration of natural (including water) resources and management alternatives;
4. Enhance our national and regional capacity to deal with drought, including the conduct of risk assessments and the improvement of early warning systems for drought preparedness and drought management, to enable protection and assistance for all, especially for the most vulnerable groups and the environment;
5. Promote cooperation among ASEAN Member States on transboundary drought management through existing ASEAN mechanisms;
6. Promote the sharing of data and information technologies, subject to the respective ASEAN Member States' national laws and regulations, best practices, and lessons learned concerning droughts of different scales, locations, and sectors in the region, and in particular, the documentation of local practices of drought risk management and their resilience capacities;
7. Encourage ASEAN Member States that have yet to adopt national drought adaptation policies to do so in a manner that is consistent with their national laws and regulations, and resilience vision, guided, *inter alia*, by the following considerations:
  - Identifying constraints and accelerating adaptation actions in key systems to sustainably produce food, manage water resources, produce clean and sustainable energy, prevent land and ecosystem degradation, and preserve the natural environment;
  - Continuing with efforts to implement the 2018 ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (ASEAN-RAI) to increase resilience and contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to disasters, climate change, and other shocks;
  - Consider developing legal and policy frameworks to harness the private sector to find diverse and innovative insurance products and services that consider the risks arising from the increased frequency of droughts, floods and other extreme weather-related events, with a particular focus on the role of Information Communication and Technology;
  - Applying advances in science, technology and innovation to improve ASEAN Member States' national capacity to i) prepare and respond to drought through the use of meteorological and hydrological drought forecasts leading to more effective risk assessment, monitoring and early warning, sound policy formulation for drought response and relief, appropriate early action, and promoting resiliency; and ii) recover from recurrent and future drought through innovative risk financing opportunities; and

- Facilitate regional and international support on capacity building for ASEAN and its Member States in drought mitigation and adaptation;
8. Harness the collective strength of ASEAN bodies and working groups to provide assistance to accelerate drought adaptation and mitigation actions in key systems of food, water, energy, land, the environment, and improve national capacity to enhance drought monitoring and early warning system for short- and long-term drought response and preparedness measures, and to enable adaptive and shock-responsive social protection, insurance, as well as economic and investment planning; and
  9. Strengthen the cooperation and utilization of the existing emergency food reserve mechanism in order to mitigate the impact of drought on food security in the region.

**WE** support the strengthening of collaboration between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, relevant sectoral bodies and stakeholders, to i) develop an ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for adaptation to drought; ii) establish networks and a community of practices for adaptive learning and continuous improvement of drought risk management in different parts of the region, building on the traditional knowledge and local solutions of communities; and iii) mainstream drought risks and disasters into the AADMER Work Programme and other relevant guidelines.

**WE** further support the strengthening of collaboration between the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, relevant sectoral bodies and stakeholders, to enhance efforts in protecting and preserving the natural environment of the various river basins in the region through cooperation in water resources utilization and management, biodiversity and infrastructures, and continuous work towards economic cooperation for sustainable development in the region.

**DONE** on the tenth day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty.