

2020 JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Adopted on 6 November 2020

1. We, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Ministers and Heads of Delegation, joined the 24th ASCC Council Meeting organised via video conference on 6 November 2020, under the chairmanship of Viet Nam.
2. We extend our full support to Viet Nam's ASEAN Chairmanship's areas of focus, including Labour and Human Resources Development; Social Welfare, Health and Development; Communication and Information; ASEAN Culture, Awareness and Identity; Environment and Climate Change; and the Mid-Term Review for the ASCC Blueprint 2025. With the theme of 'Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN', we commend the efforts and remarkable progress despite the uncertainties and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic this year, in achieving and implementing five priorities under Viet Nam's Chairmanship, namely, (i) peace, security, and stability; (ii) regional connection, cohesiveness, taking advantage of opportunities; (iii) promote ASEAN identity and awareness about the ASEAN Community; (iv) enhance ASEAN's global partnership for peace, stability, and sustainable development; and (v) increase ASEAN's institutional capacity and effectiveness.
3. We endorsed, in principle, the following outcome documents for consideration of ASEAN Leaders at the 37th ASEAN Summit:

For Adoption:

- a. Hanoi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Towards Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community; and
- b. Narrative of ASEAN Identity.

For Notation:

- a. Joint Statement of ASEAN Youth Ministers on Enhancing Youth Cooperation for A Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community;
- b. Roadmap of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work;
- c. ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers;
- d. ASEAN Guidelines on Public Service Delivery;
- e. ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025;
- f. ASEAN Guideline on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies towards Decent Work for All;
- g. ASEAN Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Risk Management for Small and Medium Enterprises in ASEAN Member States;
- h. ASCC Mid-Term Review Report;
- i. AMRI Joint Statement to Minimise the Negative Effects of COVID-19; and
- j. ASEAN Declaration on the Strengthening of Adaptation to Drought.

4. Aligned with the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), we note with appreciation the sustained interventions and mechanisms of ASCC sectoral bodies in addressing COVID-19 through enhanced cooperation within ASEAN and with other external partners. In ASEAN Health Sector, these initiatives include the continuous technical exchanges, capacity building activities, and coordination among health experts within ASEAN and with other countries beyond the region, through the ASEAN Emergency Operation Centre on public health emergencies; ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre; ASEAN Plus Three Field Epidemiology Training Network; laboratory surveillance, biosafety and biosecurity networks; as well as Health experts' meetings between ASEAN Health Sector and with counterparts.
5. We appreciate the progress and finalization of key initiatives on COVID-19 response including COVID-19 Response Fund; ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies; ASEAN Strategic Framework for Public Health Emergencies; ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan; ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement as well as the establishment of ASEAN Center for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. We further encourage operationalisation of these key initiatives to ensure ASEAN's timely and effective response to the pandemic.
6. We commend the ASEAN Disaster Management Sector that has supported some ASEAN Member States in their national response to COVID-19 and natural disasters by making relief stockpile items ready and distributing them to AMS upon their request, from the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) warehouses through the coordination of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).
7. We also appreciate the series of webinars on ASCC-led efforts to address COVID-19 organised by Viet Nam and ASEAN Secretariat which has value added as a useful platform to strategise and chart actions to recover from COVID-19's socio-economic impacts and to prevent future pandemics in a holistic, comprehensive and systematic manner.
8. We are pleased to note the progress of Implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Encompassing the initiatives undertaken across the three ASEAN Community pillars during the period 2019-2020, we appreciate the implementation of key action points in the Enabling Masterplan 2025 by the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies through measures that directly or indirectly contribute to the realisation of such action points in mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities and foster Member States' commitment towards an inclusive community.
9. We acknowledge the Virtual Interface between ASCC and Timor-Leste held in September 2020 as a useful platform in seeking more information relevant to the ASCC Fact-Finding Mission questionnaire and understanding the institutional setup and mandates of ASCC counterpart ministries and agencies of Timor-Leste, thus it complemented preparations for the upcoming ASCC Fact-Finding Mission to Timor-Leste.
10. We note the progress observed thus far in the implementation of sectoral activities highlighted by the ASCC Mid-Term Review Report. We note the recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the sectoral activities as well as ASEAN Leaders' commitment and Declarations in addressing the five characteristics of the ASCC Blueprint 2025.
11. Aligned with the ongoing process of development and finalisation of workplans for 2021-2025 of sectoral bodies under ASCC, the 24th ASCC Council adopted the recommendations by the ASCC Mid-Term Review Report and assigned SOCA to continue the collaboration with other sectoral bodies to implement the recommendations.

12. We commend all ASCC sectoral bodies for the active role and significant contributions in promoting the improvement of quality of life of ASEAN peoples and strengthening social safeguards and resilience through regional cooperation. The ASCC Council Ministers exchanged views on the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and committed to extend support in the effective implementation of the ACRF and its implementation plan that will provide a consolidated strategy for ASEAN to emerge resilient and sustainable from the COVID-19 pandemic.
13. We note the advancements in the implementation of the ASEAN Culture of Prevention (CoP) Declaration for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society. We encourage the lead sectoral bodies to further mainstream preventive measures and practices more proactively into their work plans moving forward and encourage stronger cross-sectoral and cross-pillar development of prevention activities and measures that could produce a more concerted and impactful outcome on addressing human and sustainable development. We look forward to further engendering a greater consciousness on CoP in our community-building efforts at both societal and individual levels.
14. We commend the achievements of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) in addressing violence against women and children, promoting child protection and spearheading regional efforts in gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security agenda. We look forward to the conduct of ACWC Retreat to commemorate its 10th anniversary as well as ACWC Achievement Report.
15. We note the decision of the 9th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA) to support Indonesia's initiative to lead the efforts on the promotion of creative industry in ASEAN. On that note, we look forward to the ASEAN Regional Workshop on Creative Economy which will be hosted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2021. We also support Indonesia's suggestion to add "Promotion of Creative Industry" in the List of Cross-Pillar Issues.
16. We convey our deep appreciation to Viet Nam for the effective chairmanship and excellent arrangements during its ASCC Chairmanship in 2020 and we look forward to Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021.