

2020 JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE TWENTY SIXTH ASEAN LABOUR MINISTERS MEETING¹

Issued on 28 October 2020

1. We, the Labour Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), met on 28 October 2020 for the 26th ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) which was convened virtually. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ida Fauziyah, Minister of Manpower of Indonesia, and attended by the Labour Ministers of ASEAN Member States, Secretary-General of ASEAN and their respective delegates.
2. We exchanged views on the current and emerging challenges in ASEAN and globally that have impact on the landscape of labour cooperation in the region. We supported the theme of Indonesia's 2-year Chairmanship of ALMM (2020-2022), "Promoting ASEAN Workers for Competitiveness, Resilience, and Agility in the Future of Work".
3. We resolved to continue implementing the commitments in the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Joint Statement of ASEAN Labour Ministers on Response to the Impact of COVID-19 on Labour and Employment adopted at the Special Meeting of ASEAN Labour Ministers hosted by Malaysia on 14 May 2020. We supported the finalisation of the Implementation Plan of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework for adoption by the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020 and agreed to take initiatives to support the recovery and resilience of all workers who were affected by the pandemic.
4. We noted with satisfaction that all projects and activities under the ASEAN Labour Ministers' (ALM') Work Programme 2016-2020 had been addressed by the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) and its subsidiary bodies, namely the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), Working Group on Progressive Labour Practices to Enhance the Competitiveness of ASEAN (SLOM-WG), and ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network (ASEAN-OSHNET). Few activities would continue under the new ALM' Work Programme 2021-2025.
5. We agreed to continue taking utmost efforts to promote the well-being and competencies of ASEAN workforce and to ensure productive employment, safe and healthy workplace, and adequate social protection. The Ministers therefore adopted¹ the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Work Programme 2021-2025, SLOM-WG Work Plan 2021-2025, ASEAN-OSHNET Work Plan 2021-2025, and updated Action Plan of the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers which chart the priorities of cooperation in the next five years.
6. We take pride in the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work by the 36th ASEAN Summit on 26 June 2020. We were pleased to have adopted and launched, together with the ASEAN Education Ministers, the Roadmap of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work on 16 September 2020 at the High-Level Conference hosted by Viet Nam.

¹ Thailand endorsed in principle and will provide its final adoption after obtaining the Cabinet's approval.

7. We were pleased that following the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN TVET Council by the ASEAN Labour, Education and Economic Ministers this year, the Council's focal points had been nominated by ASEAN Member States. We noted that they supported the assumption of the 2020-2022 Chairmanship by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) of the Philippines. We further noted that the Philippines would call for the virtual inaugural meeting of the Council this year.
8. We committed to collectively prepare for the Future of Work and emphasized this through the timely adoption of the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Statement on the Future of Work: Embracing Technology for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth at the sidelines of the Singapore Conference on the Future of Work held in Singapore in 2019. We supported the establishment of the Regional Centre of the Future of Work by Singapore and its launch at the HR Tech Festival Asia 2020 which was hosted by Singapore on 29 September – 1 October 2020. We noted that the Regional Centre would serve as a platform for continued social dialogue and capacity building in ASEAN in three key areas – embracing technology, tripartism, and workplace safety and health – for a proactive and future-looking agenda on the Future of Work.
9. We were pleased with the completion of the first country self-assessments of the implementation of the ASEAN Consensus on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers by ASEAN Member States. The results provided us with useful inputs on areas for mutual learning and further improvement in our region and in setting the 5-year priorities in the Action Plan of ASEAN Consensus.
10. We adopted¹ the ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers. We supported the implementation of the Guidelines with involvement of labour attaché, embassies, recruitment agencies, employers, trade unions and other stakeholders.
11. We adopted¹ the ASEAN Roadmap on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025 by ASEAN Labour Ministers to facilitate closer cooperation among relevant ASEAN bodies to collectively support ASEAN Member States towards zero-child labour. We requested the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials to start the implementation as soon as possible in cooperation with other sectors so as to address the multi-dimensional aspects of child labour holistically.
12. We adopted¹ the ASEAN Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies towards Decent Work for All. We looked forward to its voluntary-based pilot implementation by the labour and women sectors in 2021 that could pave the way towards gender equality in the world of work.
13. We adopted¹ the ASEAN Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Risk Management for Small and Medium Enterprises in ASEAN Member States which provides practical steps that can support enterprises in improving OSH standards in the workplace. Implementation of the Guidelines would support a safe return to work post-pandemic and the objectives of the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Statement on Improving OSH for Sustainable Economic Growth.
14. We were pleased to note that the ASEAN informal employment statistics had been developed as a follow up to the Vientiane Declaration on Transition from Informal Employment to Formal Employment towards Decent Work Promotion in ASEAN. We further noted the statistics had been uploaded to the ASEANStats portal (<https://data.aseanstats.org/>) early this year and requested the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials to cooperate with the ASEAN Community Statistical Systems Committee (ACSS) in regularly updating the database.

15. We were pleased that the ASEAN Inter-Ministerial Forum hosted by Malaysia on 7-9 October 2020 was insightful and productive in discussing the ways forward to implement the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Green Jobs for Equity and Inclusive Growth in ASEAN Community. The Forum's outcome and findings of the Study on Green Jobs Policy Readiness in ASEAN would guide the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials in developing strategic initiatives to promote green jobs and green skills.
16. We expressed our sincere appreciation to the Government of Indonesia, particularly the Ministry of Manpower, for the excellent chairmanship and arrangement of the 26th ALMM. We also thanked the ASEAN Secretariat for its unwavering support to the Meeting.
17. We agreed to meet again in 2022 under the 27th ALMM Chairmanship of the Philippines.