

2021 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN DECLARATION ON THE STRATEGIC AND HOLISTIC INITIATIVE TO LINK ASEAN RESPONSES TO EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

Adopted on 26 October 2021

WE, 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, on the occasion of the 38th ASEAN Summit held via videoconference on 26 October 2021:

RECALLING the principles of the ASEAN Charter, signed in Singapore on 20 November 2007; the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), signed in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 26 July 2005; the ASEAN Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation in Disaster Management, adopted at the 23rd ASEAN Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam on 9 October 2013; the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region, signed at the 28th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 6 September 2016; the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), adopted at the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 via videoconference on 14 April 2020; the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan, adopted at the 37th ASEAN Summit via videoconference on 12 November 2020; the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening of Adaptation to Droughts, noted at the 37th ASEAN Summit via videoconference on 12 November 2020; and, the Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia on 24 April 2021;

COGNISANT of the multi-dimensional impacts posed by the increase in global and interconnected challenges, including economic and financial crises, cybersecurity, climate change, environmental issues such as biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, nuclear or radiological emergencies, energy, vaccine and food shortages, natural disasters and public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which have or could greatly affect the lives and well-being of the people and sustainable development of the ASEAN Community, with reverberating and long-standing impacts throughout the region and beyond;

ACKNOWLEDGING the ongoing efforts and the growing number of initiatives established over the years under the various ASEAN-led mechanisms to enhance ASEAN's capacity and capabilities, preparedness, as well as their readiness to address various emergencies and disasters;

RECOGNISING the importance of a 'whole-of-Community approach' and promoting greater cross-pillar and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination, to better prepare for, address and recover from emergencies and disasters affecting the Southeast Asian region in an effective and holistic manner, to better protect the ASEAN Community from the detrimental impacts of these challenges, and to minimise further disruptions to the lives and livelihoods of the peoples of ASEAN;

STRESSING the importance of ASEAN's timely, prompt and expeditious response to emergencies and disasters, as well as the need for timely assessment and early-warning measures to enhance ASEAN's preparedness and response to challenges in a strategic, coordinated and holistic manner;

DETERMINED to harness technologies, experiences and lessons learnt by ASEAN Member States in responding to emergencies and disasters, and to further strengthen ASEAN's capacity and solidarity in responding to any emerging challenges and opportunities;

REAFFIRMING the commitment to foster a caring and well-prepared ASEAN Community, to better respond to and become resilient in overcoming any difficulties, thereby securing a stable and prosperous future for the peoples of ASEAN, in line with Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship priorities and deliverables under the theme of "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper";

DO HEREBY DECLARE TO:

1. **PROMOTE AND IMPLEMENT** the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), which is a strategic, holistic, cross-sectoral and coordinated approach across the ASEAN Community, to ensure ASEAN's collective, rapid, effective and timely response in mitigating the impacts of different types of emergencies and disasters affecting the region;
2. **WELCOME** the 'List of ASEAN Initiatives and Mechanisms to Respond to Regional Emergencies and Disasters', a living document that will be continually updated by the ASEAN Secretariat, that provides an overview of existing processes and mechanisms within the ASEAN framework to address emergencies and disasters affecting the region and their relevance to ASEAN SHIELD;
3. **CALL ON** ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to take steps and measures to strengthen coordination in the promotion and implementation of ASEAN SHIELD, including through the 'Recommendations on Strengthening ASEAN Cross-Pillar and Cross-Sectoral Coordination to Enhance Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response through ASEAN SHIELD', and to harmonise cross-pillar and cross-sectoral efforts in ASEAN in responding to emergencies and disasters;
4. **EMPHASISE** the need to improve communication and linkages among ASEAN processes and mechanisms to swiftly and effectively prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters, as well as, to optimise or streamline the use of existing measures and ASEAN processes, in order to shield and protect the ASEAN Community, with a view to minimising disruptions and ensuring continuity in the daily lives and services for the people;
5. **TASK** the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC), supported by the Joint Consultative Meeting (JCM) and the ASEAN Secretariat to coordinate and oversee the progress on work and initiatives under ASEAN SHIELD;
6. **FURTHER TASK** the ACC, supported by the JCM and the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, to review and strengthen the role of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator (SG-AHAC), through the review of the Terms of Reference of the Secretary-General of ASEAN as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator, to enable the Secretary-General to: (i) recommend the timely activation of the relevant ASEAN mechanisms to expeditiously address regional emergencies and disasters in consultation with the relevant Sectoral Bodies; (ii) expand the coverage of the responsibilities and roles of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator, to include coordination of ASEAN's response to other types of emergencies and disasters affecting the region that may fall under ASEAN SHIELD; and (iii) coordinate and oversee ASEAN's overall response towards the successful implementation of ASEAN SHIELD across all three ASEAN Community Pillars, to facilitate the timely and expeditious activation process of the ASEAN SHIELD;
7. **TASK** the ASEAN Secretariat to assist efforts by ASEAN Member States to promote ASEAN SHIELD and to give periodic updates to the JCM, ACC and ASEAN Leaders on emergency or disaster situations as well as ASEAN responses and progress on work and initiatives under ASEAN SHIELD when required;

8. **WELCOME** efforts to continue strengthening the analysis and monitoring capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat and relevant ASEAN centres and institutions, towards enhancing the regional capacity to assess, predict and address emerging or current emergencies and disasters in the region, that have or may hinder the development and progress achieved by the ASEAN Community;
9. **LOOK FORWARD** to the establishment of a mechanism to enable the peoples of ASEAN to contribute to natural disaster assistance in the region including through, but not limited to, the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund, and explore harmonisation of other ASEAN initiatives to enable stakeholders to contribute towards regional relief and recovery efforts;
10. **ENCOURAGE** ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to build up necessary initiatives and measures in promoting and strengthening ASEAN SHIELD, including by promoting regular exchange of experiences and information, and dialogue among ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, where relevant, to accelerate well-coordinated and regionally concerted efforts towards building a prepared, responsive and resilient ASEAN Community;
11. **PROMOTE** cooperation with ASEAN external partners in consultation with the relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, including through sharing of best practices and lessons learned, to improve the coordination of existing ASEAN processes and mechanisms, with a view to facilitate the implementation of ASEAN SHIELD, as well as to enhance ASEAN's disaster risk reduction and management capabilities, to better prepare and respond to emergencies and disasters which have or may affect the region in the future;
12. **ENCOURAGE** the contributions of and engagement with relevant stakeholders, such as the private sector and international organisations including the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction-Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNDRR-ROAP), in enhancing regional capacity to support the advancement of ASEAN's implementation and strengthening of ASEAN SHIELD, as well as explore the undertaking of further research, and exchange of information and best practices on early warning systems and communication mechanisms on emergencies and disasters; and
13. **COMMIT** to an enduring aspiration to shield and protect the peoples of ASEAN, including the most vulnerable populations, during times of emergency and disaster, to protect their lives and livelihoods, and ensure the continued provision of essential goods and services, including medicines and medical supplies, to minimise disruptions or impacts and spill-over effects to the ASEAN Community.

ADOPTED on this Twenty Sixth Day of October in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty One in a single original copy in the English language.