

2023 ASEAN LEADERS JOINT STATEMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ASEAN VILLAGES NETWORK

Adopted in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia on 10 May 2023

WE, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao's People 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 42nd ASEAN Summit chaired by the Republic of Indonesia;

NOTING the significant progress made by ASEAN Member States in achieving the ASEAN Vision 2025, including ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community which engages and benefits the people and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic;

RECALLING the purposes of ASEAN, as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, which are to enhance regional resilience, promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN for the strengthening of ASEAN Community;

RECOGNISING the ASEAN Master Plan on Rural Development which aims to provide a cohesive guiding framework for the ASEAN rural development and poverty alleviation agenda, which contributes to and is shaped by the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to promote rural development in order to accelerate the achievement of ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as beyond.

Do hereby:

1. **AGREE** to establish an ASEAN Villages Network with the purpose to among others:
 - i. Provide platform for whole-of-community and inclusive participation so as to their voice are heard and able to contribute to and benefit from the development;
 - ii. Facilitate collaboration and cooperation among villages to enable villages to fast-track rural transformation;
 - iii. Exchange strategies to improve digital infrastructure, increase digital usage, enhance digital skills and inclusion, and promote digital innovation in rural areas;
 - iv. Facilitate better and wider rural products' access to markets so as to provide more opportunities for village products to penetrate to regional and international markets;
 - v. Explore collaboration with External Partners and private sectors to support the sustainability of the Network; and
 - vi. Strengthen ASEAN identity among villages community.

2. **TASK** the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMMRDPE) with the support of ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) and other relevant ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies to mobilise resources for its implementations in accordance with the national laws, policies and regulations of ASEAN Member States and develop an ASEAN Villages Network Framework to translate the Network into a concrete and bottom-up platform to fast-track the village development towards the attainment of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Adopted in Labuan Bajo, the Republic of Indonesia, on this Tenth Day of May in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Three, in a single original copy in the English language.