

2023 ASEAN LEADERS' DECLARATION ON ASEAN AS AN EPICENTRUM OF GROWTH

Adopted in Jakarta, Indonesia on 5 September 2023

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, gathered in Jakarta on the occasion of the 43rd ASEAN Summit on 5 September 2023;

RECOGNISING that global challenges are becoming more frequent, interconnected, and multidimensional; from the implications of climate change, spillovers from rising geopolitical tension and conflict, uneven recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerabilities in global food and energy systems, disruption in supply chains, to volatilities in the financial markets; and the need to uphold ASEAN's shared values and norms, international law, mutual trust and confidence, inclusive dialogue and cooperation to address these emerging challenges;

ALSO RECOGNISING the opportunities arising from emerging mega-trends, such as digital technology advancements and the green and blue economies, as well as the individual and collective potentials of ASEAN Member States;

NOTING ASEAN's rising global relevance and unique convening power amid the emerging multipolar global architecture, and growing interest of partners to engage in dialogue and develop stronger cooperation with ASEAN; **ALSO NOTING** the geopolitically driven emergence of alternative multilateral and plurilateral frameworks and the risk of weakening multilateralism;

HIGHLIGHTING Indonesia's 2023 Chairmanship's theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth", which underscores ASEAN's commitment to ensure its continued relevance, resilience, effectiveness, and responsiveness to future regional and global challenges, and its vision to be the centre and driver of economic growth in the region and beyond;

ACKNOWLEDGING the contribution of ASEAN cooperation in all three pillars of the ASEAN Community towards ASEAN Community 2025 and the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) and ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its implementation plan in realising the vision of ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth;

UNDERSCORING the importance of continued regional cooperation and collective actions in realising ASEAN Vision 2045;

REAFFIRMING the fundamental importance of ASEAN Centrality and unity in ASEAN's engagement with external partners through ASEAN-led mechanisms to build mutual trust and confidence as well as reinforce an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre, and **FURTHER REAFFIRMING** the value of a multilateral approach to ensure continued peace, security, stability, and prosperity in the region;

NOTING that more intensive ASEAN cooperation and partnership with external partners across its Community-building agenda is also key to supporting the vision of ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth including through mainstreaming and promoting the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) in all ASEAN-led mechanisms;

DO HEREBY COMMIT to strengthening the region's position as the epicentrum of growth by navigating and responding to global challenges and unleashing the region's full growth potentials amidst the megatrends, and **AGREE** to do so by (i) strengthening ASEAN resilience against future shocks, (ii) leveraging new growth drivers, and (iii) embracing a forward-looking and future-proofed ASEAN agenda/

A. STRENGTHENING ASEAN RESILIENCE AGAINST FUTURE SHOCKS

1. We recognise the increasingly challenging and uncertain global environment and agree to work together to strengthen ASEAN resilience and capabilities to bounce back and move forward expeditiously and effectively from future shocks. We will start by focusing our efforts on the following areas.
 - a) **Health Resilience:** We will strengthen the resilience of ASEAN health architecture towards emerging and non-emerging diseases, pandemics, demographic and climate changes, including through improved synergy and strengthened collaboration between the health and finance sectors, as well as promoting the interoperability of regional and global health efforts. We promote quality of health services for the ASEAN people across the life course in an equitable manner by, among others, addressing health risks and improving access to essential health care services for Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases, Maternal and Child Health, accelerating Tuberculosis elimination and malaria eradication as well as ending HIV/AIDS in the region, and increasing availability and accessibility to health care professionals, especially in government health institutions.
 - b) **Climate and Disaster Resilience:** Noting the broad implications of climate change, we will mainstream the climate resilience agenda across ASEAN cooperation areas. Recognising increasing exposure to disasters in the region, including climate disasters, we will scale up efforts to integrate disaster resilience and management into sustainable development and climate action and develop shocked-proofed infrastructure and system by mobilising cross-sectoral and cross-pillar coordination and initiatives to ensure a collective regional response to cushion impacts of disasters.
 - c) **Food Systems Resilience.** We will redouble efforts towards regional food security by strengthening our agriculture productivity and food supply chains through improving our food systems efficiency, promoting good and sustainable agricultural practices, increasing access to safe and nutritious food, and advocating for the adoption of agricultural technologies. We also recognise the importance of an early warning system and rapid response to ensure food availability in times of crises.
 - d) **Energy Systems Resilience.** We commit to accelerating just and inclusive energy transition and enhancing energy interconnectivity to achieve sustainable energy security, as well as optimising the synergy and complementarity between regional and national efforts.

- e) **Macroeconomic Resilience and Financial Stability:** We acknowledge that macroeconomic resilience and financial stability serve as the foundation for ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth, and recognise the importance of strengthening ASEAN macroeconomic policy mix to enable ASEAN Member States to use all available tools to ensure the stability of our economies. We resolve to strengthen the capacity to manage financial stability risks, deepen regional financial integration and stability, and improve the readiness of the regional response to macroeconomic instability and financial system challenges.
 - f) **Supply Chain Connectivity and Resilience:** We will work together to strengthen supply chain resilience in the region and beyond by ensuring productivity and connectivity, and minimising the risks to future supply chain disruptions. We commit to strengthening industry competitiveness as well as ensuring the seamless flow of essential and critical products, taking into consideration individual country comparative advantages, circumstances, and policies, including through timely information sharing and commitments on trade-related measures.
 - g) **Institutional Resilience.** We will uphold ASEAN's institutional relevance, centrality, and resilience amidst growing geopolitical economy uncertainties, fragmentation risks, and emerging parallel frameworks. We will also uphold existing rules-based, transparent, nondiscriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading systems. We believe that such systems allow inclusive and sustainable participation in global supply chains and ensure a level playing field for countries at different levels of development. We reaffirm our resolve to ensure the continuity of the ASEAN agenda and the relevance and effectiveness of ASEAN institutions, notwithstanding external and internal challenges.
2. ASEAN resilience will be an ongoing and whole-of-Community agenda that is integral to ASEAN Vision 2045. As initial steps, we task:
- a) Health Ministers to discuss a possibility to enhance the work of ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance (AVSSR) and ASEAN Drug Security and Self-Reliance (ADSSR) for ASEAN collaboration on vaccines therapeutic and diagnostic manufacturing and research and development;
 - b) Health Ministers and Finance Ministers to strengthen collaboration and further strengthen the existing regional fund mechanism for health emergencies, better utilisation of ASEAN health emergency resources, and enhance access to essential countermeasures;
 - c) Health Ministers and Finance Ministers to strengthen collaboration in propelling an inclusive and resilient recovery, strengthening regional health capacity, including pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR), promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices, and coordination arrangements between Finance and Health Ministries through Senior Officials level for both respective ASEAN Health and Finance Sectors.
 - d) ASEAN Cross-Sectoral Coordination Committee on Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance (ACSCC-DRFI) to strengthen efforts to increase financial resilience and cooperation in response to disaster risks through integrating disaster risk management in the economic development agenda;

- e) Agriculture and Forestry Ministers, Transport Ministers, and Economic Ministers to work together towards the development of seamless integrated logistics systems for food and agricultural inputs and strengthen cooperation towards an ASEAN Food Security Community, including through exploring a possibility to establish local resource-based Food Reserve and strengthening the role of ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS);
- f) Energy Ministers to work towards the full implementation of the ASEAN Power Grid and Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline, including the conduct of a study to assess the feasibility of cross-border electricity trade under the Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines Power Integration Projects (BIMP-PIP);
- g) Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to (i) develop ASEAN Local Currency Transaction (LCT) Framework, with close coordination among relevant sectoral bodies, to promote the use of local currency in the region; (ii) oversee the implementation and advancement of regional payment connectivity, (iii) encourage further cooperation on digital assets, as well as (iv) strengthen regional macroeconomic coordination including with the Plus 3 Partners on the operational readiness of the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation;
- h) Economic Ministers and other relevant Ministers to ensure regional supply chain connectivity particularly the smooth flow of essential goods by minimising unnecessary restrictions or impediments creating barriers to trade, ensuring timely information sharing on trade-related measures, and exploring the potential of digital technologies for supply chain risk management; and
- i) ASEAN Economic Community Council Ministers to coordinate with relevant bodies of other pillars, to monitor the impact of geopolitical tensions and uncertainties on the economy and work together, with relevant partners as appropriate, to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of ASEAN frameworks through, among others, enhancing integration among the ASEAN Member States as well as collaboration and cooperation with major economic partners while upholding the existing rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open, and inclusive multilateral trading systems.

B. LEVERAGING NEW GROWTH DRIVERS

3. To be an epicentrum of growth, ASEAN Community building agenda needs to evolve with emerging megatrends and be agile and proactive in leveraging new growth drivers. We acknowledge the extensive work needed to unleash our region's growth potential and commit to working together for their realisation.
 - a) **Global Supply chains.** Recognising trade as a cornerstone of economic growth and employment in the region, we support ASEAN's participation in global supply chains through the development of higher value-added industry and regional supply chains and seamless cross-border trade. We note and welcome the renewed focus on supply chain resilience and sustainability. We note with caution the discourse around supply chain shortening and fragmentation. While there may be selected opportunities from global supply chain restructuring, we stress that open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory global supply chains are in the long-term interest of the region.

- b) **Digital Transformation.** Recognising the opportunities and challenges presented, we commit to accelerate digital transformation and enhance cooperation to narrow the regional digital gap by creating an enabling comprehensive digital ecosystem in the region that is inclusive, accessible, affordable, people-centred, safe, secure, relevant to the needs of end-users and various stakeholders aims, as well as paving the way towards the ASEAN Digital Economic Community 2045.
- c) **Green Economy.** We will accelerate efforts to collectively achieve net-zero carbon emissions around mid-century and promote the flows of sustainable investment through a whole-of-ASEAN approach to address greenhouse gas emissions. We commit to redouble ASEAN efforts towards carbon neutrality to achieve net-zero emissions, including through the promotion of responsible consumption and production, adoption of green technologies and enabling regulations and frameworks as appropriate, for just and inclusive energy transition, as well as circular economy, in consideration and in synergy with the respective circumstances, capabilities, priorities, and international commitments of ASEAN Member States. We acknowledge the important role played by the private sector and other partners in financing and mobilising resources to support the ASEAN in this endeavour.
- d) **Blue Economy.** Recognising the great value and potential of the region's oceans, seas, and fresh water, and noting the multifaceted, cross-stakeholder, and cross-cutting concept of blue economy, and promoting value-added and value-chain creation of resources from oceans, seas, and fresh water in inclusive, and sustainable way, we agree to elevate ASEAN's collaborative efforts to advance Blue Economy as a new engine of ASEAN's future economic growth and accelerate the implementation of the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework as part of our efforts on the Blue Economy in ASEAN.
- e) **Creative Economy.** We note the potential of the region's cultural and creative industries leveraged by its diversity and heterogeneity, rich cultures, histories, and traditions, as well as the dynamism and creative energy of its youth. We uphold the value of a strengthened people-to-people exchange as an opportunity to break barriers, forge partnerships, experience new cultures, and engage in intellectual, traditional, and cultural exchanges among the ASEAN Member States. We undertake to promote creative economy in the region as a driver of future economic growth based on creativity, innovation, digitalisation, inclusivity, and protection of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expression, and intellectual property rights.
- f) **Inclusive Economy.** We acknowledge the need to redouble efforts to ensure inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth in the region by empowering our micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through capacity building and promotion of partnership with large enterprises, in areas such as adopting inclusive business models, in fostering a dynamic business environment and a robust trade and investment.

4. To leverage on these new growth drivers, we task:

- a) ASEAN Economic Community Council Ministers, in coordination with relevant sectoral bodies to:
 - i. coordinate the implementation of the ASEAN Strategy on Carbon Neutrality;
 - ii. work towards the conclusion of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement negotiation by 2025, with a view to achieve an inclusive digital transformation towards an ASEAN Digital Economic Community 2045;

- iii. accelerate the development of the electric vehicle industry as envisioned by the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Developing Regional Electric Vehicle Ecosystem;
- b) Economic Ministers to take steps to expand and deepen regional industrial cooperation and value chain development, particularly in high-technology and high value-added sectors, including through:
- i. implementing the Framework for the ASEAN Industrial Project-Based Initiative, monitoring the developments and coordinating to safeguard ASEAN's interests on supply chain-related frameworks formulation or negotiations across multiple fronts;
 - ii. fully implementing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP);
 - iii. ensuring that the upgrading negotiations of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and various ASEAN Plus One FTAs result in agreements that are relevant, modern, forward-looking, and more responsive to regional and global developments, including in anticipation of future supply chain disruptions;
 - iv. optimising digital transformation for trade activities and facilitation through full implementation and utilisation of the ASEAN Single Windows.
- c) Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to continue the development of the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance and promote the mobilisation of sustainable finance to support a just, orderly, and credible transition in ASEAN;
- d) Finance Ministers to strengthen cooperation for carbon pricing schemes;
- e) Transport Ministers to coordinate with relevant Ministers towards the establishment of the regional transport infrastructure;
- f) ASEAN Coordinating Council to coordinate the implementation of the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework;
- g) Culture and Arts Ministers, in coordination with relevant Ministers, to develop comprehensive policies to support an ecosystem to foster creative economy and industry in the region including through the continuity of the ASEAN Creative Business Forum; and
- h) Economic Ministers, Finance Ministers, and Central Bank Governors to continue to play advocacy roles in promoting access to finance, digital financial services and literacy for MSMEs to support financial inclusion of MSMEs as well as enhancing collaboration to create enabling environment as a regional initiative to support the implementation of inclusive business promotion as a part of the Plan of Action for the Promotion of Inclusive Business in ASEAN.

C. TOWARDS A FORWARD-LOOKING, FUTURE-PROOFED ASEAN

5. Realising ASEAN's vision as an epicentrum of growth will require a forward-looking and future-proofed ASEAN agenda. We undertake to embrace forward-looking vision and innovative and future-ready initiatives that would optimise ASEAN effectiveness and impact. We will do so by the following.

- a) **Implementing ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.** Noting growing geopolitical and geoeconomic dynamics, we underscore swift and effective implementation of the AOIP through ASEAN-led mechanisms, thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. We emphasise that ASEAN's vision to be an epicentrum of growth is conditional upon its openness to cooperation and collaboration with dialogue partners and engagement with other external partners, while maintaining ASEAN Centrality and unity. We acknowledge that implementation of the AOIP also requires ASEAN to strengthen its connectivity, including through promoting regional and sub-regional initiatives and exploring possible cooperation with our partners in line with the Connecting the Connectivities approach.
 - b) **Preparing for Tomorrow's Economy.** We recognise the need for the ASEAN economy to go beyond business as usual to boost productivity to compete and thrive in a rapidly evolving global environment. We will elevate our economic community, among others, by enhancing ASEAN's attractiveness as a sustainable investment destination, promoting scientific and technological research, stimulating innovation and digital technology adoption, effectively responding to the rapidly changing labour markets as we march towards our green economy agenda, and proactively revitalising skills development in the region to meet the needs of the future industry and create job opportunities for ASEAN citizens in an inclusive manner.
 - c) **Building Future-ready ASEAN Institutions.** We recognise the imperative of adapting and updating ASEAN institutions and ways of work to effectively respond to global challenges. We acknowledge the growing interlinkages between political, security, and economic issues and the need to transcend ASEAN's pillar-centric approach. We commit to undertake a Whole-of-Community approach towards ASEAN Vision 2045 and strengthen the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat to support the Community's endeavour in the new geopolitical and geoeconomic paradigm.
 - d) **Advancing Progress towards Sustainable Development Goals:** We underscore that ASEAN's success as an epicentrum of growth will be built upon healthy and inclusive society and sustainable ecosystems. We will scale up our resolve to work together towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
6. We reaffirm our commitment towards achieving a forward-looking and futureproofed ASEAN agenda. We therefore task:
- a) Foreign Ministers to further efforts in operationalising the AOIP, in coordination with other relevant Ministers, by mainstreaming cooperation and collaboration in the region through:
 - i. expediting AOIP projects and activities initiated by ASEAN or jointly with external partner(s) and/or interested parties;
 - ii. enhancing cooperation with interested parties in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions to implement the four priority areas of AOIP, where appropriate, while maintaining ASEAN Centrality and unity without creating new mechanisms;
 - iii. fostering an outward-looking community that supports regional growth and resilience through inclusive cooperation and collaboration with external partners, including to respond collectively and constructively to global developments and issues of common concern and interest; and
 - iv. supporting the list of concrete projects annexed to be part of the realisation of ASEAN as an Epicentrum of Growth.

- b) Connectivity Coordinating Committee to expedite the completion of MPAC 2025 initiatives and develop the ASEAN Connectivity Post-2025 Agenda that also supports the implementation of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, including through the approach of a Whole-of-Community and Connecting the Connectivities within and beyond the region;
- c) Economic Ministers to future proof the ASEAN Economic Community including through enhancing investment policies and facilitations, strengthening a balanced investment protection, as well as ensuring transparency and certainty of investment laws and regulations, and promoting convergence in competition policy while still considering each ASEAN Member State's sensitivities and levels of development to attract quality and sustainable investments;
- d) Labour Ministers and Education Ministers to coordinate with Economic Ministers and other relevant Ministers to strengthen labour market response, taking into consideration the opportunities and challenges posed by double disruption including crises and technological advances, such as Artificial Intelligence, digital transformation, as well as green transition, to strengthen a competitive, resilient, agile, and inclusive labour force that optimises the region's demographic advantages;
- e) Digital Ministers to work with relevant Ministers and partners to improve digital literacy, skills and talent, as well as capacity building on cybersecurity and data protection and privacy and to expedite the completion of ASEAN Digital Masterplan (ADM) 2025 initiatives, including measures to track the progress and success indicators of ADM 2025 and identify recommendations on the next steps forward through the Midterm Review Study, and to position ASEAN as a leading digital community and economic block, powered by secure and transformative services, technologies, and ecosystem by 2025;
- f) Science, Technology, and Innovation Ministers to work with relevant Ministers and partners to enhance cooperation, development, and integration of science, technology, and innovation to support the digital transformation;
- g) ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council to coordinate relevant Ministers to identify synergies and potential cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaborations to accelerate ASEAN's efforts in achieving SDGs, Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and the care economy;
- h) ASEAN Coordinating Council and all Community Council Ministers to monitor and ensure progress in their respective areas and undertake cross-pillar collaboration and cooperation towards the vision of ASEAN as an epicentrum of growth and the development of ASEAN Vision 2045.

Adopted on this Fifth Day of September in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Three in a single original copy in the English Language.