

2021 JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF THE 11TH ASEAN LAW MINISTERS MEETING

Adopted on 27 October 2021

1. The Eleventh ASEAN Law Ministers Meeting (ALAWMM), held on 27 October 2021, was hosted and chaired by Malaysia via video conference.
2. The Meeting took note of ASEAN's significant achievements, in particular, towards the full and effective implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, as well as the preparation on the work to develop the Post-2025 ASEAN Community Vision. The Meeting further noted the theme "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper" under the chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam in 2021. The Meeting commended the continued collective efforts of ASEAN to effectively contain, respond to and recover swiftly from the COVID-19 pandemic, including, among others, advancing the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and its Implementation Plan. The Meeting acknowledged the increasing interest of external partners to expand and deepen engagement with ASEAN, and constructively contribute to ASEAN community-building process and to the promotion of the ASEAN Centrality.
3. The Meeting reviewed the work progress since the Tenth ALAWMM which was held on 12 October 2018 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The ongoing work of ALAWMM and ASLOM is part and parcel of the progress made in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025. In this regard, the Meeting noted with satisfaction the implementation of various cooperation activities and initiatives, which contribute to strengthening law and legal cooperation in ASEAN, as well as supporting a rules-based ASEAN, especially in the areas of promoting awareness and understanding of ASEAN Member States' laws and legal systems, on-going work towards the harmonisation of ASEAN trade laws, strengthening ASEAN's capacity in crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law.
4. The Meeting commended the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM) for the work progress in the development of an ASEAN Extradition Treaty, in particular, the intersessional approval of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the newly-established ASLOM Working Group on the ASEAN Extradition Treaty (ASLOM WG on AET) which held its first Meeting on 6-7 April 2021 hosted and chaired by Singapore via video conference. The Meeting appreciated Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines' respective offers to host the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th ASLOM WG on AET in 2022. The ASLOM WG on AET shall endeavour to finish its work and come up with the agreed final draft AET within two years from the date of endorsement of the TOR by ASLOM which will complement the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAT) in strengthening ASEAN's resilience and capacity to combat transnational crimes and enhancing cooperation within ASEAN to ensure respect for the rule of law.
5. The Meeting also welcomed the elevation of the MLAT into an ASEAN Treaty and the inclusion of the ASEAN Ministers/Attorneys-General Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (AMAG-MLAT) and the Senior Officials' Meeting of the Central Authorities on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (SOM-MLAT) as ASEAN sectoral bodies under the ASEAN Political Security Community Pillar in Annex 1 of the ASEAN Charter. The AMAG-MLAT, with the support of the SOM-MLAT, would play an important role in ensuring the effective implementation of the ASEAN MLAT, thus contributing to ASEAN's ongoing efforts in enhancing its institutional capacity in combating transnational crimes.

6. The Meeting was encouraged with the engagement and participation of ASLOM, represented by its Chair in various cooperation programmes and activities initiated by other sectoral bodies to address cross-cutting issues that require cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination among the different ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies. To this end, the Meeting reaffirmed its continued commitments to support ASEAN integration and community-building agenda, and encouraged ASLOM to continue its support, in particular, for the ongoing review of the implementation of the ASEAN Charter aimed at identifying outstanding issues encountered, as well as the necessary steps to ensure the smooth and effective functioning of the ASEAN system.
7. The Meeting was encouraged with ASEAN's achievements in the implementation of the ASEAN integration and community-building agenda, in particular, the blueprints of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and noted various challenges of cross-cutting issues that require effective and efficient cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination. To this end, the Meeting recalled their readiness to support the realisation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and agreed for ASLOM to develop appropriate avenues to closely coordinate and work with other ASEAN sectoral bodies and entities associated with ASEAN to support ASEAN common goals and objectives. In this connection, the Meeting commended the work of the ASEAN Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (ACCPCJ) in furthering efforts to serve as a platform for cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaboration.
8. The Meeting was also pleased to note the positive development of ASLOM's initiatives in its engagement and consultation with external parties and institutions on issues of common concern and interest to help advance ASEAN integration and community-building agenda. In this regard, the Meeting commended the success of the first ASLOM-Japan Consultation and ASLOM's engagement with The Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) which would build a strong foundation for ASLOM and its counterparts to further discuss and explore practical areas of cooperation and collaboration.
9. The Meeting further acknowledged that the increasing work in the area of law and legal cooperation and the intensification of ASEAN integration and community-building efforts would require a more active role and participation of ALAWMM, and therefore adopted ASLOM's recommendation to increase the frequency of ASLOM and ALAWMM, which shall be held every one year and two years, respectively.
10. The Meeting thanked the Philippines for offering to host the 21st ASLOM in 2022 and Myanmar for offering to host the 22nd ASLOM and 12th ALAWMM in 2023.