

2024 JOINT STATEMENT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Issued in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 26 September 2024

1. The 32nd ASCC Council Meeting was held on 26 September 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, under the ASEAN Chairmanship of the Lao PDR.
2. The Meeting commended the Lao PDR for its 2024 ASEAN Chairmanship with the theme “ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience,” which underscores ASEAN commitment to intensify ASEAN cooperation under the three community pillars; promote infrastructure connectivity, narrow the development gap, promote greater economic integration and people-to-people exchanges; and further strengthen ASEAN’s relations with external partners, while maintaining ASEAN’s relevance and ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture. The Meeting looked forward to the realisation of the ‘Enhancing Connectivity’ priority areas: (i) Integrating and Connecting Economies, (ii) Forging an Inclusive and Sustainable Future, (iii) Transforming for the Digital Future, and (iv) Culture and Arts: Promoting the Role of ASEAN Culture and the Arts for Inclusion and Sustainability; as well as the ‘Enhancing Resilience’ priority areas: (i) Development of the Strategic Plans to implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, (ii) Enhancing ASEAN Centrality, (iii) Promoting Environmental Cooperation: Climate Change Resilience, (iv) Women and Children: Promoting the Role of Women and Children Towards the Transformation of Behaviourism in ASEAN, and (v) Health: Transforming ASEAN Health Development Resilience in a New Context.
3. The Meeting commended the Lao PDR for realizing its 2024 ASEAN Chairmanship priorities under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar to enhance the role of culture and arts in the region through strengthening human capacity building and fostering growth of small and medium-sized cultural enterprises as well as green growth and sustainable development; rural communities development, enhance environmental preservation and sustainable development through strengthening conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources, addressing climate change, promotion of environmentally sustainable cities, and sustainable consumption and production; promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; and address the vulnerabilities of the region’s health system and strengthen health infrastructures resilience and capacity, including collaboration between the health and finance sectors.
4. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the progress of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 implementation and the increase in follow-up actions at the regional and national levels for the various declarations adopted under the ASCC Pillar. As the ASCC Blueprint 2025 approaches the end-term of its implementation, the Meeting encouraged sectoral bodies under the ASCC, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, to fully implement their respective sectoral work plans, socialise the ASCC Database for Monitoring and Evaluation System to support tracking of ASCC Blueprint 2025 milestones, and extend their full support and participation to the ongoing End-Term Review of the ASCC Blueprint 2025. The Meeting acknowledged that the findings from the End-Term Review of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 are expected to provide insights and strategic recommendations for the ASCC Post-2025 agenda.

5. The Meeting commended the progress of the development of the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan and noted that the conclusion of the 7th Meeting of Ad Hoc Working Group to Develop the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan on 23-24 September 2024 finalised a total of 115 Strategic Measures across 21 Key Result Areas which reflect key ASCC human and sustainable development areas. The Meeting also commended the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group to Develop the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan, and the leadership of the Senior Officials Committee for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community in ensuring that the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan reflects ASCC priorities and agenda, challenges and trends that ASCC will face in the years ahead, and sectoral realities including partnerships and cooperation that could influence the implementation of the ASCC Post-2025 Strategic Plan. The Meeting welcomed the successful convening of the ASCC Council High Level Interface with Parliamentarians, ASCC Eminent Persons and Chairs of ASCC Sectoral Ministerial Bodies in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and looked forward to the incorporation of the insights and recommendations to the ASCC Post-2025 agenda. The Meeting looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and the ASEAN Strategic Plans in 2025.
6. The Meeting looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community, which comprises concrete recommendations that seek to continue ASEAN's efforts in operationalizing the Comprehensive Framework on the Care Economy. The Declaration further reaffirms ASEAN's commitment in enhancing the health, wellbeing and welfare of the people in the region by continuing to promote measures to ensure a caring society. Further recognising the importance of social welfare and development, the Meeting looked forward to the notation of the ASEAN Regional Guidance on Strengthening the Role of Social Workers and the wider Social Service Workforce in the Education Sector and the ASEAN Regional Guidance on Strengthening the Role of Social Workers and the wider Social Service Workforce in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience which will strengthen the role of social workers and the wider social service workforce.
7. Acknowledging the ongoing challenge of combating climate change and mitigating its negative impacts, the Meeting looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change 29th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP-29) and ASEAN Joint Statement on Biodiversity to the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity – CBD COP 16. These joint statements underscored ASEAN's collective efforts in addressing climate change and promoting environmental sustainability, sustainable development and climate financing.
8. The Meeting commended the ongoing initiatives in strengthening health resilience, and looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Strengthening Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity which underscored the importance of strengthening regional coordination with relevant stakeholders to enhance the region's health security.
9. The Meeting looked forward to the adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Prevention of Child Labour, including the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour which reaffirmed ASEAN's commitments in eliminating violence against children by addressing child labour comprehensively through a holistic and multisectoral approach, and complement and enhance existing efforts in the prevention of child labour and protection of children.
10. The Meeting highlighted the importance of early childhood care and education, and looked forward to the notation of the Vientiane Statement on Equity, Access and Environment: Advancing Climate Resilience in Early Childhood Settings in ASEAN which highlights the need to integrate climate resilience into early childhood care and education. The Meeting also looked forward to the notation of the ASEAN Leaders of the ASEAN-SEAMEO Joint Declaration on Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education.

11. The Meeting commended the progress of the ASCC in ensuring the protection of migrant workers and their families, and looked forward to the adoption of the Vientiane Declaration on Skills Mobility, Recognition, and Development of Migrant Workers and its Checklist, and the notation of the ASEAN Guidelines on Portability of Social Security Benefits for Migrant Workers and the ASEAN Guidelines on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers. The Meeting also looked forward to the notation of the ASEAN Migration Outlook (2nd edition), the Scoping Study Report to Support the Development of the Pool of Funds for the ASEAN Human Resource Development for the Changing World of Work, and the ASEAN Statement on Strengthening Government Strategies on Mental Health and Well-being Towards Achieving Work-Life Balance in Public Sector.
12. The Meeting underscored the continuing work of ASEAN in mainstreaming gender equality and looked forward to the notation of the ASEAN Leaders of the ASEAN Guideline for Developing National Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for a Coordinated Response to Violence against Women and Girls which aims to establish nationally coordinated standard procedures and processes that address violence against women and girls with an emphasis on ensuring a cohesive and survivor- centered response.
13. The Meeting highlighted the importance of implementing the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration (ALD) on Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030 and looked forward to the notation of the Plan of Action to Operationalize the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration (ALD) on Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030 which further renews ASEAN's commitment to end inequalities that continue to hinder the responses to HIV and AIDS, and ensure that no one is left behind in the region's AIDS response.
14. The Meeting reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment in strengthening disaster risk management systems and looked forward to the notation of the ASEAN Capacity Building Roadmap 2025-2030 on Disaster Management, the Report on Strengthening ASEAN Multi-Hazard End to End Early Warning System for Natural Disasters (E2E EWS) – An Assessment of Current Capacity, the ASEAN Disaster Risk Communication Framework (ADRCF), the ASEAN Ministerial Declaration on Building a Resilient ASEAN through Inclusive and Sustainable Disaster Recovery, and the Joint Statement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) 2024. The Meeting also noted the upcoming 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Tsunami and looked forward to the notation of the ASEAN Ministerial Statement on the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Indian Ocean Tsunami.
15. The Meeting reiterated the importance of expediting the finalisation of the Establishment Agreement of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), and the full operationalization of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC) and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACC THPC) which will further strengthen ASEAN's collective efforts on achieving environmental sustainability and preparedness to public health emergencies.
16. The Meeting exchanged views on strategic directions of the ASCC, particularly through ASEAN's collective efforts with relevant ASEAN partners on a mutually-beneficial cooperation basis in order to support and strengthen ASEAN's role and contribution in achieving and shaping global development agenda.

17. The Meeting expressed support for Timor-Leste's implementation of the "Roadmap for Timor-Leste's Full Membership in ASEAN" and commended their active participation to ASCC meetings and activities as observers. The Meeting encouraged ASEAN Member States and ASCC Sectoral Bodies to support capacity-building initiatives for Timor-Leste, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels.
18. The Meeting conveyed deep appreciation and gratitude to the Lao PDR for their effective Chairmanship and excellent arrangements for the 31st and 32nd ASCC Council Meetings and looked forward to the upcoming ASCC Chairmanship under Malaysia in 2025.