

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE ASEAN
CHILDREN'S FORUM
(ACF)**



**One Vision
One Identity
One Community**

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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A. Background

1. Article 1(13) of the ASEAN Charter states one of the purposes of ASEAN to promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building.
2. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint also expresses ASEAN's commitment to promoting social justice and mainstreaming people's rights into its policies and all spheres of life, including the rights and welfare of vulnerable groups such as children.
3. The Southeast Asia Children's Conference was convened on 10-14 December 2006 in Antipolo City, the Philippines. The Conference carried the theme of "Towards One Caring and Sharing Community for Children". Child delegates from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Viet Nam participated. The children made a declaration that was presented to the Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting for the 6th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (PrepSOM for the

7th AMMSWD) held on 4-5 December 2007 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. One of the salient recommendations of the children was the creation of a Southeast Asia Children's Forum that will be the regional voice of children in the region.

4. The 5th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (5th SOMSWD) held on 3-4 December 2008 in Manila, the Philippines, agreed to institutionalise the Forum and that the name should be changed to be the ASEAN Children's Forum. Participation of children from Timor Leste would be welcomed as observers.
5. The 6th SOMSWD held on 12-13 January 2010 in Singapore noted that as part of the preparation for the First ASEAN Children's Forum, a prototype of the Forum's website was being prepared by the Philippines. The prototype was designed in English, to be interactive and child-friendly, and to include a country page.
6. The First ASEAN Children's Forum was held on 19-22 October 2010 in Clark, Pampanga, the Philippines. The Forum was attended by 32 children, including 7 children with disabilities, who were accompanied by their respective mentors, from ASEAN Member States. The children made recommendations for the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the ASEAN Children's Forum and also came up with the Action Proposals.

7. The Preparatory Senior Officials Meeting for the 7th AMMSWD held on 23-24 November 2010 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, considered the children's recommendations for the TOR of the ASEAN Children's Forum. The Meeting agreed on the convening of the Forum regularly. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the generous offer of Singapore to host the Second ASEAN Children's Forum in 2012.

B. Objectives

8. The Forum shall serve as a venue for children from ASEAN Member States to:
 - a) Participate in the ASEAN Community building by 2015;
 - b) Express views and pursue aspirations on issues affecting their lives and other regional issues of their interests;
 - c) Cooperate and work together towards contributing to regional development;
9. The Forum shall also serve as a venue to:
 - a) Promote mutual respect for different cultures and build friendships and common understanding among children from ASEAN Member States;

- b) Promote greater awareness of ASEAN among children from ASEAN Member States;
- c) Advocate children's rights in the region;
- d) Enhance the capabilities of children as leaders and representatives of their generation.

C. Organisational Arrangement

Participation

- 10. The Forum shall be comprised of child delegates from ASEAN Member States.
- 11. Child delegates must be between the ages of 12-18 years. Special consideration will be given to children with special needs.
- 12. Child delegates shall be nominated by their respective ASEAN Member States through the existing national children's conferences or other appropriate national processes that will ensure wider representation of children.
- 13. The participation of child delegates from each ASEAN Member State shall be accompanied by at least one adult guide/mentor.

14. The Forum shall promote gender equality among the child delegates.
15. The Forum shall provide an equal opportunity for the participation of children with special needs.
16. The Forum may be attended by representatives of relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies government officials and NGOs from ASEAN Member States, when necessary, on a self-funding basis.
17. Decision making shall be based on consensus and freedom of children to give suggestions is encouraged.

Role of the Child Delegates

18. Child delegates shall be informed of the issues affecting their lives prior to the Forum.
19. Child delegates shall actively participate in the Forum.
20. Child delegates shall take the following actions following the Forum:
 - a) Disseminate information to other children in their home countries / communities concerning the Forum and issues affecting children's lives.

- b) Advocate for children's concerns and views.
 - c) Carry out follow-up actions of the Forum's recommendations.
21. Child delegates shall take part in all processes of the Forum, e.g. planning, decision making, implementation, and evaluation.
 22. Representatives of the child delegates shall present the outcomes of the Forum to the AMMSWD, through the SOMSWD, convened in the same year. When the Forum is convened in other year, the outcomes will be presented by the child representatives at the SOMSWD in that year. In such time, the children shall be given the opportunity to present or report the Forum's outcomes to their respective AMMSWD Ministers in their countries.
 23. The ASEAN Secretariat shall share the Forum's outcomes with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, particularly the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY), ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), for information sharing, coordination and support.

Criteria for Adult Guides/Mentors

24. Adult guides/mentors shall be nominated by their respective ASEAN Member States.
25. Adult guides/mentors shall be:
 - a) Having the capacity and experience to guide/mentor children. For this purpose, the adult guides/mentors shall be at least 19 years old or above.
 - b) Child- and PWD-friendly.
 - c) Familiar with children's rights, issues and concerns, and points of views.

D. Schedule and Hosting of the Forum

26. The Forum shall be convened biennially prior to the SOMSWD in that year.
27. Hosting of the Forum will be rotated among ASEAN Member States on an alphabetical order.

E. Role of the Host Country

28. The host country is responsible on the following tasks, in coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat:

- a) Prepare the programme and necessary arrangements of the Forum.
- b) Issue the invitation for ASEAN Member States to nominate their respective child delegates to the Forum.
- c) Document and share with other ASEAN Member States the proceeding of the Forum, experiences and lesson learned in hosting the Forum for the purpose of continued improvement of the organisation of the next Forums.
- d) Provide the necessary input to the Chair/host country of the AMMSWD and SOMSWD in preparing for the child delegates' participation to present the outcomes of the Forum to the Senior Officials and/or Ministers.

F. Financial Arrangement

- 29. Cost-sharing arrangement among ASEAN Member States shall be applied. The host country shall cover the organisational costs of the Forum. ASEAN Member States shall be responsible to secure funding support for the airfares, accommodation and other necessary costs of their

respective child delegates and their adult guides/mentors.

30. Funding support from UNICEF, ASEAN Dialogue Partners or other sources may be explored to promote wide participation of child delegates from ASEAN Member States, especially those that are unable to secure funds, and/or to assist the host country in organising the Forum if necessary.

G. Website of the Forum

31. A website of the Forum shall be developed and maintained to serve the following purposes:
 - a) Promote the Forum to the public;
 - b) Provide information about national children's forums and other children's events in ASEAN Member States;
 - c) Facilitate online communications and maintain friendships among the child delegates;
 - d) Listen to the voices of children from ASEAN Member States.
32. The website will be developed and initially maintained by the Philippines until such time when

the SOMSWD will determine the appropriate mechanism to maintain the sustainability of the website.

33. The website shall contain a child-friendly format in terms of wording, comics, and fun pages.
 34. The website shall be safeguarded with child protection measures, such as ensuring parental guidance, protecting children from online abusers, and respecting the privacy of information of children.
 35. The website shall be linked with relevant websites in ASEAN and its Member States.
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