



JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

The Eleventh Session of the ASEAN Community Statistical System Committee (ACSS11) 12-14 October 2021, Virtual Meeting Coordinated from Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

1. The Eleventh Session of the ASEAN Community Statistical System Committee (ACSS11), hosted by Department of Statistics of Brunei Darussalam, was held virtually on 12 to 14 October 2021. The Session was chaired by Ms. Hajah Mariah Haji Yahya, Director General of the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Brunei Darussalam, with Mdm. Hang Lina, Director General, National Institute of Statistics of Cambodia as the Co-chairperson.
2. Since its establishment in 2011, the ACSS has been providing relevant, timely and comparable ASEAN statistics in support of ASEAN integration monitoring and evidence-based policy and decision making. The ACSS has also been consistently strengthening its cooperation to enhance statistical capacities of the ASEAN Member States (AMSs) and the ASEAN Secretariat.
3. With the support of the Sub-Committee on Planning and Coordination (SCPC) and the technical working groups, ACSS has been able to improve data provision in supporting ASEAN policy makers. The ACSS has disseminated over 700 statistical indicators via the ASEANstats Website.
4. Despite achieving significant improvements at the national and regional levels, the ACSS continues to face challenges which require stronger statistical cooperation. Statistical capacity gap among AMSs and limited national and regional resources are among the key challenges for the ACSS to improve data availability and quality. Demand to make available selected statistics on a more timely and disaggregated basis also contribute to key challenges that needs to be addressed. Improving coordination among national data producers is also crucial to better respond to increasing data needs, including global initiatives such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. Aligned with the overall theme of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021 of *"We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper"*, and as part of our continuous commitment to further enhance regional statistical cooperation and respond proactively to emerging statistical requirements as well as challenges related to COVID-19 pandemic, we adopted the following theme for 2021 ACSS work programme:

"Building Resilient Statistics to COVID-19 Recovery and Beyond"

Key Deliverables of the ACSS Work Programme 2021

6. In meeting increasing data needs of ASEAN policy makers, we continued our statistical programmes to provide timely and comparable statistics on international merchandise trade, foreign direct investment, international trade in services, SDGs, National Accounts and other macroeconomic and social indicators. Efforts to improve quality of ASEAN data included the development of two important reports on *"The Quality Report on ASEAN International Merchandise Trade Statistics"* and *"The Compilers Handbook on ASEAN International Merchandise Trade Statistics"*.
7. We endorsed the third revision of the Broad Framework for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Statistics to better capture the current and emerging data needs, resources, business processes and supporting mechanisms of ACSS.



8. We developed metadata templates for System of National Accounts (SNA) and social indicators as a part of our efforts in improving the implementation of Open Data and in enhancing the quality of our official statistics.
9. In recognition of the potential use of Big Data in official statistics as new sources of data, we endorsed the Concept Note on the Pilot Project of Big Data Utilisation for Enhancement of ACSS Official Statistics for implementation from 2022.
10. We are successfully implementing the ASEAN-Help-ASEAN Framework for ACSS Capacity Building by organising various training courses in sustaining our capacity building programmes as well as to facilitate greater knowledge and experience sharing among AMSs to speed up the development of statistics at national and regional levels.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic to the Provision of Official Statistics

11. Since 2020, COVID-19 greatly impacted statistical activities in ASEAN, particularly those that require field enumeration. It presented serious and crucial challenges for the provision of official statistics.
12. However, despite the challenges, AMSs have continued to provide reliable official statistics through changing business process, developing and enhancing methodologies, and increasing the utilisation of technologies to minimise the impact of COVID-19.
13. We have also promoted online mechanism for our meetings, discussions and capacity building such as workshops, trainings and technical assistance.

Recovery Together Post COVID-19

14. We commended AMSs' efforts in responding to the challenges and in identifying opportunities to build resilience in the production and dissemination of more timely and comparable statistics:
 - i) Brunei Darussalam's initiatives in (1) innovating the 2021 Population and Housing Census through digital platform to enable the public to submit their information online, (2) strengthening the use of administrative data as alternative sources of information to ensure consistent and quality statistics, and (3) continuing the implementation of its regular socio-economic statistical production processes and the timeliness of data dissemination through effective leverage on digital technology.
 - ii) Cambodia's prepare in-depth analysis reports using data from 2019 census, for example fertility and nuptiality, mortality, disability, maternal mortality, population distribution and urbanization, migration, population aging and population projection; conduct Cambodia Agriculture Survey 2020; Nation-wide Establishment Listing 2021; Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2021; Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021 and online dissemination of CamStat - a national statistical indicators reporting platform.
 - iii) To cope with pandemic situation and face future challenges, BPS - Statistics Indonesia has put digital transformation as the main strategy to produce official statistics for informed decision making. Digital transformation will automate the production of statistics to be more effective and efficient through the implementation of statistical infrastructure, the use of administrative data



provided by other government agencies within Indonesia One Data initiative framework, and the utilization of Big Data sources.

- iv) Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) and Partners have successfully completed the third Economic Census and the Lao Agriculture Census and launched findings in 2021. The covid-19 pandemic has put LSB in difficult situation that it affected a wide range of statistical activities. To address its impact, LSB plan for alternative data collection approaches and working modalities, improvement coordination among agencies, and fostering partnership to support modernising LSB and national statistical system.
- v) Malaysia's (1) Adjustment in the Malaysian Population and Housing Census 2020; (2) Developed DOSM Strategic Plan and DOSM Digitalisation Strategic Plan for 2021-2025; (3) Established the National Statistics and Data Council; (4) Strengthened the technology-based data collection and dissemination; (5) Expanding integrated and digitisation data sources (web scrapping, mobile telephone positioning and geospatial analysis by ML and AI); (6) Monthly advanced estimates for GDP; and (7) New indicators on time-related and skill-related underemployment.
- vi) Myanmar conducted the Household Vulnerability Survey and the Impact of COVID-19 on Entrepreneurs Survey by telephone to understand their economic circumstances due to the restrictions related to COVID-19. Tackling the challenges brought about by COVID-19 and to build resilient statistics, data collecting a compiling process will be conducted through online platform among statistical agencies.
- vii) The Philippines' (1) conduct of the monthly Labor Force Survey (LFS) to produce high-frequency statistical information on the Philippine labor market; (2) release of weekly data on the number and causes of deaths, particularly due to COVID-19 to the Department of Health; (3) completed the overall revision and rebasing to 2018 of the National Accounts (quarterly and annual) including the Regional Accounts; (4) implementation in 2021 of the Pilot Community-Based Monitoring System and (5) Pilot Census for the 2022 Census of Agriculture and Fisheries.
- viii) Singapore's digitalisation efforts span across the data value chain, including (1) web-scraping data and online submission of returns; (2) robotic process automation in repetitive work processes, machine learning in data coding, and artificial intelligence in extracting and integrating data from various sources; (3) advanced modelling and analytics in data compilation; (4) data analytic capabilities and insights to support policy studies; and (5) digital tools and platforms to communicate data and engage users.
- ix) Thailand's (1) use of new data sources to support the preparation of statistics, such as the database of farmer registration for Agricultural census 2022, and business registration for Business and Industrial Census 2021-2022; (2) development of National Data Catalogue to collect standardized government, public and personal data to support the government policy of open data and data governance.
- x) Viet Nam's (1) Conduct of the Economic Census using web-form and CAPI; (2) Development and submission of the Viet Nam Statistical Development Strategy 2021-2030, vision to 2045 for the



Prime Minister's approval; (3) Revision of the List of national statistical indicators in the Statistics Law to better meet data requirements; (4) Development of a Set of Digital Economy Indicators; (5) Strong application of IT in data collection, i.e. e-questionnaire, online and real-time data management for surveys, and strengthening the use of administrative data.

Appreciation for Development Partners and International Organisations

15. We appreciated the contribution of the ASEAN Regional Integration Support by the EU (ARISE) Plus Programme in providing technical assistance to support the ACSS in strengthening of institutional framework and coordination, improving the availability and comparability of key statistics for ASEAN regional integration monitoring and narrowing the gaps in statistical capacity among AMSs.
16. We welcomed United Nation Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP)'s support in the conduct of regional training on Big Data in 2022.
17. We noted the contribution of the International Organisations, namely the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). We acknowledged with appreciation their support towards our goal of a more responsive ACSS providing high quality statistics in support of the ASEAN integration.

Handover of the ACSS Chairmanship in 2021

18. We expressed our sincere gratitude to the Government of Brunei Darussalam, through its Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, for its excellent chairmanship, warm hospitality and impeccable arrangements for the Eleventh Session of the ACSS Committee.
19. We welcomed the ACSS Chairmanship of Cambodia in 2022.

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ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee

- 1. BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: Ms. Hajah Mariah Haji Yahya**
- 2. KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA: Mdm. Hang Lina**
- 3. REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA: Dr. Margo Yuwono**
- 4. LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: Mrs. Phonesaly Souksavath**
- 5. MALAYSIA: Dr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin**
- 6. THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR: Mr. Htun Zaw**
- 7. REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES: Dr. Claire Dennis Mapa**
- 8. REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE: Ms. Wong Wee Kim**
- 9. KINGDOM OF THAILAND: Ms. Piyanuch Wuttisorn**
- 10. THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM: Dr. Nguyen Thi Huong**
- 11. ASEAN SECRETARIAT: Dr. Ahmad Zafarullah Abdul Jalil**

14 October 2021