



JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC) COUNCIL

23 June 2020

1. We, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Ministers and Heads of Delegation, joined the 23rd ASCC Council Meeting organised via video conference on 23 June 2020, under the chairmanship of Viet Nam.
2. We extend our full support to the Viet Nam ASEAN Chairmanship's areas of focus, including Labour and Human Resources Development; Social Welfare, Health and Development; Communication and Information; ASEAN Culture, Awareness and Identity; Environment and Climate Change; and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the ASCC Pillar. In line with its theme of 'Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN', the five priorities of Viet Nam's ASEAN Chairmanship are: (i) peace, security, and stability; (ii) regional connection, cohesiveness, taking advantage of opportunities; (iii) promote ASEAN identity and awareness about the ASEAN Community; (iv) enhance ASEAN's global partnership for peace, stability, and sustainable development; and (v) increase ASEAN's institutional capacity and effectiveness.
3. We noted with satisfaction that the ASCC Pillar has continued to promote improving the quality of life of ASEAN peoples through regional cooperation, despite the uncertainties and challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. We forge ahead in our efforts to address the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and identify opportunities for revitalisation of the ASEAN region post-pandemic. We noted Indonesia's proposal to establish an ASEAN Plus Three Task Force on Pandemics.
4. We noted with encouragement the active contributions of all ASCC sectoral bodies to the regional coordinated response to COVID-19. Concerted intersectoral initiatives have enabled the potential development of a post-pandemic recovery plan that aims to restore the employment and livelihoods of workers and foster the social and economic recovery of vulnerable groups. These commendable joint efforts ensure that ASEAN maintains its course in realising an inclusive, resilient and sustainable ASEAN Community. In this regard, we appreciated and welcomed the Viet Nam-ASEAN Secretariat's proposal to organise a series of webinars on ASCC-led efforts to address COVID-19. We recognise that this is a useful and timely initiative and we are confident that the webinars will produce significant outcomes.
5. We noted the progress of the MTR of the ASCC Blueprint 2025, with most of the ASCC sectoral bodies already reviewing their current work plans and preparing

for the next five-year work plans. We encouraged all ASCC sectoral bodies to render their full support and engagement to the conduct of the MTR with a view to submitting the Final Report of the MTR to the 37th ASEAN Summit.

6. We endorsed the 'ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work', and recommended it for adoption by ASEAN Leaders at the 36th ASEAN Summit. The Declaration reaffirms ASEAN's commitment to strengthen ASEAN cooperation on labour, education and business sectors, towards promoting new skills for the future, as well as advancing inclusive education and employment. We also noted with appreciation the establishment of the ASEAN TVET Council, and regional initiatives for the promotion of public health, social work, marine environment cooperation, and the empowerment of women.
7. We commend the preparations and ongoing activities under the 2020 Year of ASEAN Identity which further foster the sense of belonging in ASEAN by the people and cement our joint efforts in building a sharing and caring ASEAN Community. We also looked forward to the finalisation of "The Narrative of ASEAN Identity" in the near future.
8. We support the proposal for the participation of the ASCC Ministers in the ASEAN Leaders' Interface with Representatives of ASEAN Youth in line with the 36th ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Leaders' Special Session on Women's Empowerment in Digital Age.
9. We look forward to the timely adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on Promoting Social Work led by Viet Nam at the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020.
10. We noted the schedule of the ASCC fact-finding mission to Timor Leste and the progress of seconding ASCC officers to the permanent missions to ASEAN.
11. We convey our deep appreciation to Viet Nam for the effective chairmanship and excellent arrangements of the 23rd ASCC Council Meeting and look forward to the 24th ASCC Council Meeting in October 2020.

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