

**JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT BY
THE ASEAN SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING ON YOUTH (SOMY)
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY ON 12 AUGUST 2020**

ASEAN Commends Youth-led Actions in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

12 AUGUST - In commemoration of International Youth Day on 12 August 2020, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) expresses great appreciation to youths from across ASEAN for their unique and valuable contributions in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Youth¹ makes up one third of the overall 650 million ASEAN population. This segment of the population is confronted by significant challenges brought about by the pandemic situation.

Despite the trying circumstances ASEAN youth are currently facing, it is inspiring to witness that they remain dynamic in empowering their communities to become more adaptive and resilient. In the face of an evolving pandemic, the strong passion, creativity and innovative mindset of ASEAN youth powers them through this crisis.

During the first episode of the Interactive Webinar Series on ASEAN Youth and COVID-19: *#ASEANYouth at the Forefront of COVID-19 Response* held on 27 July 2020, the valuable experience, insights, and recommendations shared by youth speakers from diverse backgrounds – a volunteer, a medical technologist, a social entrepreneur, and a biodiversity and nature conservation champion – are a source of hope and inspiration. The webinar was jointly organised by the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Foundation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, in commemoration of International Youth Day.

ASEAN youth have been increasingly involved in the pandemic response as medical front liners, implementers of social welfare projects, initiators of groundbreaking enterprises, as well as social innovators. In doing so, they have amplified the important role of youth as catalysts in driving social progress, economic growth, and environmental sustainability, ultimately contributing towards achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recalling the adoption of ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day by the ASEAN Leaders in 2018, stronger coordination should be pursued among stakeholders in mobilising youth participation both in pandemic response and post-pandemic recovery efforts, and in addressing similar challenges in the years to come.

Cognisant of the important contributions of ASEAN youth in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth and relevant development actors will work to expand opportunities to involve Millennials and Gen-Z from across the member states in harmonising the co-existence between society, technology, and the environment.

¹ ASEAN's youth age range: 15 – 35 years old

ASEAN Youth Ministers commit to place high on the agenda the promotion of digital skills to enable youth to be future-ready, as well as the provision of spaces for youth to become more involved in policy discourse. To this end, in the next five years, the SOMY aims to promote the synergy of efforts in the five domains of ASEAN Youth Development Index: Education; Health and Well-Being; Employment and Opportunity; Participation and Engagement; and ASEAN Awareness, Values and Identity.

Youth are the future of ASEAN. Today, ASEAN celebrates the contributions the youth have made to the strength and dynamism of the region. Moving forward, it is important to ensure that they are adequately supported to embrace the new normal and are not left behind. As ASEAN jointly strives to build back better, it is crucial for us to work together to empower our youth to thrive in an ever-changing world.

NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS OF THE ASEAN SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING ON YOUTH

Brunei Darussalam: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Brunei Darussalam

Cambodia: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia

Indonesia: Ministry of Youth and Sports, Indonesia

Lao PDR: Lao Youth Union (Chair)

Malaysia: Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia (Vice-Chair)

Myanmar: Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar

Philippines: National Youth Commission of the Philippines

Singapore: National Youth Council Singapore

Thailand: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand

Viet Nam: National Committee on Youth of Vietnam

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