

Vientiane Declaration on Reinforcing Cultural Heritage Cooperation in ASEAN

WE, the Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN on the occasion of the 28th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 6th September 2016;

WELCOMING the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015, and **RECOGNISING** the aim of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025 to foster a dynamic and harmonious Community that is aware and proud of its identity, culture and heritage;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage (Bangkok, 2000), Declaration on ASEAN Unity in Cultural Diversity: Towards Strengthening ASEAN Community (Bali, 2011), Declaration on Culture for ASEAN Community's Sustainable Development (Hue, 2014), Declaration on Culture and Arts to Promote ASEAN's Identity Towards A Dynamic and Harmonious ASEAN Community (Bandar Seri Begawan, 2016) that highlight the important role of culture in building a coherent and harmonious ASEAN Community and pursue sustainable economic development;

EXPRESSING concern about the increasing threats to tangible cultural heritage as a result of illicit trafficking in cultural property, natural disasters, climate change, unsustainable tourism, rapid urbanisation, including threats emanating from poverty and marginalisation;

CONVINCED that strengthening regional cooperation in the protection, preservation and promotion of tangible cultural heritage is a key to counter such threats;

RECOGNISING the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which highlights the significant role of culture in two areas namely: (i) strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage and (ii) promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development, both addressing tangible and intangible cultural heritage;

WELCOMING the adoption of the Strategic Plan on Culture and Arts (2016-2025) and discussions of the ASEAN Ministers of Culture and Arts (AMCA) on the development of heritage management programs in ASEAN to place cultural heritage at the heart of the ASEAN community building efforts, and connect them for the benefit of future generations;

DO HEREBY AGREE THAT THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE NECESSARY IN REINFORCING ASEAN COOPERATION IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

I. Advancing Tangible Cultural Heritage Cooperation

1.1. Protection of cultural heritage

- Continue to ensure the effectiveness of laws and policies protecting cultural heritage from illicit trade and trafficking;
- Strengthen efforts to exchange information on stolen or trafficked cultural artefacts;
- Cooperate to return, seek the return, or help facilitate the return, to their rightful owners of cultural property that have been stolen from a museum, site, or similar repositories;
- Explore collaboration with relevant sectors to develop a cooperation framework to mitigate the impacts of climate change, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and natural disasters, such as with tourism and urban development on creative solutions to protect heritage sites from damaging commercialisation and urbanisation; and with law enforcement in eliminating cross-border trade of cultural objects;

1.2. Preservation of cultural heritage

- Continue the research on the synergy between cultural heritage and other policies and programs related to cultural heritage preservation;
- Explore the possibility of region-wide effort to assist ASEAN Member States where cultural heritage are damaged by, or are facing deterioration from, natural and man-made disasters;
- Explore cooperation among cultural institutions, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Office (UNESCO), and heritage networks to develop the professional competence of heritage managers in safeguarding cultural heritage and adapting their skills to evolving cultural protection standards;
- Enhance community awareness and involvement on the protection of heritage sites and movable and immovable cultural properties;

1.3. Promotion of cultural heritage

- Acknowledge the cross-sectoral policies relevant to cultural heritage and promote the mainstreaming of cultural heritage in the wider context of national policies and ASEAN's cooperation mechanisms;
- Engage young people, especially in local communities, to actively act as custodians of their heritage, thereby facilitating their involvement in responding to emergency situations wherein cultural heritage is at risk;
- Highlight the common cultural threads binding ASEAN through education and shared stories to further enliven a sense of ownership in managing the region's cultural heritage;

- Develop promotional materials of ASEAN heritage for distribution on different media outlets and broadcast channels, and project it internationally as One ASEAN;

II. Strengthening Intangible Cultural Heritage Cooperation

2.1. Identify the areas of cooperation related to intangible cultural heritage, and use it as a means to transmit ASEAN values and solidarity among the peoples of the region;

2.2. Facilitate regular and sustained people-to-people exchanges, especially targeting youths and artists highlighting the rich traditions, shared values and diverse cultural expressions of ASEAN, creativity and innovative spirit of ASEAN craftsmen and youth apprenticeship;

2.3. Encourage joint scholarship and research on the cultural interconnections of the ASEAN region resulting from regional diaspora and the enduring cultural bond of ASEAN peoples;

2.4. Support the documentation and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage and living traditions;

TASK the ASEAN Ministers for Culture and Arts (AMCA), its Senior Officials (SOMCA) and the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI) to implement this Declaration in line with the ASEAN Strategic Plan on Culture and Arts 2016-2025 and other relevant cooperation frameworks;

REQUEST the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council, its sectoral ministerial bodies and other relevant partners (e.g. ASEAN Dialogue Partners, non-government and inter-government organisations concerned with culture, the academe and research institutions, professional networks, etc.) to support and monitor the realisation of this Declaration;

ADOPTED in Vientiane, Lao PDR on the 6th of September 2016.