



DECLARATION ON BUILDING A MORE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT FUTURE: UNLOCKING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ASEAN

WE, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as "ASEAN"), namely: Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 41st ASEAN Summit:

UPHOLDING the commitment of ASEAN to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls enshrined in the Declaration on the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region (1988), ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2004), Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children (2010), ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD (2012), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN (2013), the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals (2017), the Action Agenda on Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) in ASEAN (2017), the Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN (2017), the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018), and the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021-2025.

REAFFIRMING the complementarity between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which underscores the importance of women's economic empowerment in driving inclusive economic growth, alleviating poverty, sustaining peace and fostering long-term resilience by ensuring women's equal rights and access to education and training, economic resources, decision-making, leadership as well as equitable access to health services, technology, financial services and markets.

REITERATING the need to strengthen the efforts to promote the economic empowerment of women and women's entrepreneurship development in ASEAN by creating a holistic system and enabling environment that will build capacity, enhance knowledge and skills and maximise the potentials of women entrepreneurs in our region as reflected in the ASEAN Declaration on Innovation (2017), the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work and its roadmap (2020), the ASEAN Guideline on Gender Mainstreaming into Labour and Employment Policies Towards Decent Work For All (2020), the Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN (2021) and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery

Framework (2020).

UNDERSCORING the unprecedented and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and their economic security particularly concerning loss of employment, detrimental effects on women-led businesses, compounded challenges for women in informal sector and sharp increases in unpaid care and domestic work on women which has exacerbated existing biases and barriers including violence against women, harmful gender stereotypes and socio-cultural norms, gender digital divide, limited access to finance and impediments to reskilling and upskilling which in turn undermine women's economic empowerment and the potentials for optimal growth for women's entrepreneurship in the region.

COMMENDING steadfast endeavors and remarkable progress of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs' Network (AWEN), the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM), the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (ACCMSME), the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) who continue to unlock and to harness women's entrepreneurship through promoting opportunities for learning, expanding networks, fostering business skills, combatting discrimination and exploitation, boosting access to finance, digital solutions, logistic and other services for women and through advocating for women's economic leadership at all levels.

ACKNOWLEDGING that women are main drivers for inclusive growth, economic integration, and transformation and social cohesion, particularly in the COVID-19 recovery and their roles and contributions as economic and sustainable development actors. Women business owners must be recognized, nurtured, and promoted in order to unlock and fulfill their potential for inclusive entrepreneurship from micro, small and medium-sized (MSMEs) to large enterprises in a wide range of sectors, including emerging opportunities in social entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, platform work and provision of care and services.

MINDFUL of the fact that building a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future for women entrepreneurs requires multi-sectoral collaboration, engagement and commitment from multiple stakeholders including government agencies, private and business sector, investors, social enterprises, the media, academic institutions, experts and practitioners, ASEAN dialogue partners, international as well as community and civil society organisations.

DO HEREBY:

Resolve to undertake the following actions, considering the context, capacities and resources of the respective ASEAN Member States, to advance and unlock the potential of women entrepreneurs in the region:

1. Address systemic and institutional barriers faced by women, especially women with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations, to entrepreneurship and broader economic empowerment, that may prevent them from thriving from micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the self-employed to larger businesses, namely limited access

to knowledge, poor entrepreneurial skills, deficient training opportunities and markets, insufficient financial support and capitals, inadequate networking and access to industry experience, unfavourable working conditions, discriminatory socio-cultural norms and practices as well as large gender pay gap, gender digital divide and lack of decent work, and disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work, among others.

2. Strengthen policy and legislative frameworks that promote women's entrepreneurship development, resilience and economic empowerment, address gaps and setbacks in women's business ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services and resources, in access to public and private markets and e-markets and enhance governance mechanisms including gender-responsive procurement (GRP) practices that includes women entrepreneur voices in decision making and leadership both in public and private sectors.
3. Promote gender-responsive investments that include a combination of investment in women-owned or led businesses in key sectors and help create employment opportunities; investment in businesses that promotes workplace equity; or investing in organizations that offer products or services that improve the lives of women in a sustainable manner.
4. Promote targeted measures to enable women to adapt, respond to and recover from the crisis particularly the COVID-19 pandemic and to build long-term resilience by supporting women in starting new and diversified businesses, in self-employment and by improving the opportunities to reskilling and upskilling efforts through effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), digital platforms and overall connectivity and access to diverse business models and diverse sources of finance and services.
5. Invest in data collection for gender analysis, creating action plans, and monitoring the progress of women-owned and led businesses and enterprises in regardless of whether they are formal or informal, and located in the urban or rural areas, to reach all segments of women entrepreneurs including micro, small, medium and large-sized businesses as well as emerging start-ups across industries with a priority to foster emerging female underrepresented sectors, including in technology and innovative sectors in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), the creative economy, and in sustainable development and inform about policies and interventions to bolster women's entrepreneurship at each stage of development.
6. Promote an inclusive and gender-responsive entrepreneurship approach that harnesses the role of women entrepreneurs to advance sustainable development and that embraces the diversities and differences of women entrepreneurs, acknowledging the needs of the female youth, rural women, low-income women, migrant women, women with disabilities, older women, women-headed households, women in vulnerable situations, women who are victims of violence and disasters, among others and tackle the ensuing challenges of the sector in entrepreneurship development.

7. Provide gender-responsive and accessible entrepreneurship support services to women, especially women with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations, that include but not limited to, data and information and technology, technical support and expertise, capacity-building including vocational training activities, trade and financial services, and marketing support and opportunities, training on digital literacy and skills development especially the application of digital technology and doing business on the e-commerce trading floors to promote adaptation and readiness to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
8. Recognize and value women's unpaid care and domestic work and address the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of gender-responsive and care-sensitive public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility and of work-life balance within the household and the family, whilst creating an enabling environment for care entrepreneurship opportunities to complement and enhance the public provision of care in the community.
9. Enhance cross-sectoral and inter-pillar cooperation across the ASEAN Community, as well as engage ASEAN's entities and Dialogue Partners, international and civil society organisations, academe, and business and private sector, social enterprise, experts and practitioners among others, to continue advancing and unlocking the tremendous potential of women's entrepreneurship in ASEAN as a means to promote women's empowerment, sustainable development, shared prosperity, social cohesion and resilience.

WE ENCOURAGE relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in the three (3) ASEAN Community Pillars to promote and implement the provisions of the present declaration in all its aspects, and task the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW), with the support of the ACW to review, coordinate, monitor and report its progress through appropriate instruments and actions with the support of AMS.

ADOPTED on this Eleventh Day of November in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.