

**Joint Statement on Human Capital Development
at the 8th ASEAN-U.S. Summit**

WE, the Heads of State/Government of Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States of America, met via videoconference, on 14 November 2020, under Viet Nam's 2020 ASEAN Chairmanship, on the occasion of the 8th ASEAN-U.S. Summit;

We underscored our shared commitment to strengthening the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership. We reiterated the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which is based on the principles of openness, transparency, inclusivity and a rules-based framework, among others. We also noted that the U.S. vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region is committed to supporting these principles;

We reaffirmed our commitment to work towards an inclusive, peaceful, secure, stable, and prosperous region for our billion people, including through cooperation to advance human capital development in the region;

We, hereby decide to:

Education for A Resilient Population

1. Foster the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that drives growth and prosperity in the region;
2. Strengthen the development of human capital in the ASEAN region, including the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work and its roadmap, endeavour to expand educational opportunities and exchanges, encourage English language skills development, women's empowerment, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programming between the ASEAN Member States and the United States, and note the ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 9 September 2019;
3. Reaffirm the importance of higher education and TVET in inclusive and sustainable economic development, support academic links and exchanges and seek the expansion of university and educational linkages between ASEAN and the United States, especially for youth, including through the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) and the new YSEALI Academy at Fulbright University Viet Nam, the Fulbright U.S.-ASEAN Program, the U.S.-ASEAN Internship Program, and any other relevant programmes;

4. Underscore the importance of enhancing digital literacy education, especially for women and girls, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, life-long learning, and technology and innovation skills of our people to meet the opportunities and challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR);

Healthy People for A Healthy Future

5. Support continued partnership in our shared health futures, reaffirming the importance of investing in training in health to strengthen human capital especially for the health of children and youth, older persons, women and girls, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups, and recognise the need to prioritise global health security, including transparent timely and effective international cooperation and information sharing, as well as continued collaboration to facilitate access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines, and vaccines needed to combat the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and joint efforts to prevent, detect and respond to future outbreaks and pandemic threats;
6. Welcome the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures initiative, which captures existing and ongoing public health work between the United States and ASEAN and develops long-term partnerships to advance our shared goals of a healthy future, including in infectious disease control, non-communicable disease prevention, safe water access, nutrition, and maternal and child health; and strengthens health system capacity across the region and develops the next generation of human capital in health, noting the launch of the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures Alumni Network (HFAN) at the April 2020 ASEAN-U.S. Foreign Ministers Ministerial on COVID-19;

Growing Possibilities for Our Peoples Through Thriving Economies

7. Encourage private sector investment in TVET, development of local workforces, and support for local communities where companies invest and operate;
8. Enhance people-to-people ties to build economic linkages and mutual understanding between our peoples;
9. Strengthen the ASEAN Smart Cities Network and U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership to further ASEAN's goal of improving the lives of our people and addressing the challenges of sustainable urbanisation through universal design, technology, and innovation;

10. Support women's economic participation and financial inclusion, which underpins prosperity and sustainable economic growth, and firmly commit to supporting an enabling environment to advance the development of talent and skills of women in the workforce and to promote financial access for women by removing barriers to women's equal access to finance;
11. Aspire to shared prosperity based on strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive economic growth and mutual benefit, recognising the importance of pursuing policies that lead to dynamic, open, and competitive economies that foster economic growth, job creation, and respect for workers' rights, and spur innovation, entrepreneurship, and connectivity;
12. Support economic participation of older persons by promoting decent work for them, including self-employment if they prefer, as well as commit to explore further cooperation and networking in this area between ASEAN and the U.S.;
13. Encourage more private-sector investment, including through the Blue Dot Network, to fulfil ASEAN region's massive infrastructure demands, and build capacity of ASEAN infrastructure officials to develop quality infrastructure thus facilitating investment and human capital development in the region, contributing to implementing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the "Connecting the Connectivities" approach;
14. Enhance cooperation in the field of digital economy, including e-commerce as well as support the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the ASEAN region through initiatives in key areas such as human capital development, financing and technical assistance;
15. Enhance regional energy cooperation, including on energy security and sustainability, and expand exchanges within the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation 2016-2025 (APAEC) framework to promote access to sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy;
16. Continue to work together to improve cybersecurity capabilities and enhance policy cooperation to enable information and communication technologies (ICTs) to be harnessed to serve the livelihoods and aspirations of our peoples, recognising that an open, secure, interoperable, and reliable Internet is an engine of growth and innovation;
17. Affirm that the use of technology and agricultural innovations, including biotechnology, can strengthen food security and food safety, promote sustainability, and provide new economic opportunities to rural populations that depend on agriculture for their livelihood;

Responsible and Committed Governments to Protect the Futures of Our People

18. Support capacity building for government officials in areas including good governance, e-governance, the rule of law, anti-corruption, economic development, and security;
19. Commit to work towards the elimination of violence against women and children, especially girls, through the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, and take all necessary measures to protect them from all forms of discrimination and violence, as well as reducing risks, providing assistance and care to fulfil the needs of survivors, enhancing the protection, healing, recovery and reintegration of victims, preventing the re-victimisation of women and children and persons with disabilities, subjected to any form of violence, whether in the home, the workplace, the community, or society or in custody, and taking appropriate responses to offenders and perpetrators, and promoting changes in societal attitudes and behaviour;
20. Commit to work towards ensuring and promoting gender mainstreaming in project planning and programme design for human capital development, as well as enhance institutional capacity to promote equitable access to basic social services for all, such as health care, education, including early childhood education, vocational training, and skills training;
21. Continue to support the effective implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, to prosecute traffickers, prevent trafficking in persons, and protect the victims;
22. Support efforts to implement the “ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” to promote and protect the rights as well as to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the region;
23. Continue to promote opportunities for our people through strengthening democracy, supporting anti-corruption efforts, enhancing good governance, and adhering to the rule of law;
24. Respect the rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
25. Continue to support ASEAN’s efforts in narrowing the development gap within ASEAN, through the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration

(IAI) Work Plan IV (2021-2025), and promoting the sustainable development cooperation in the region;

26. Note the necessity of building a connected and integrated ASEAN region, including through supporting sub-regional frameworks such as the Mekong – U.S. Partnership (MUSP), the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), which aims to build human capital, promote sustainable economic growth and development, and facilitate investment in ASEAN.
