



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN DECLARATION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND NATION-BUILDING

The Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the occasion of the 38th ASEAN Summit held on 26-28 October 2021:

REFERRING to the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the declaration on Social Progress and Development, which recognize the family as the natural and fundamental group unit of society and entitled to protection by society and the State;

RECALLING the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Bill of Human Rights, which highlight equality, non-discrimination and universality of human rights are principles that should be reflected as important in community development and nation building;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to the Brunei Darussalam Declaration on Strengthening Family Institution: Caring for the Elderly in 2010, the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community in 2011, the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children in 2010, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN in 2015, the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection in 2013, the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals in 2017, the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy, and Harmonious Society in 2017, the Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Towards Comprehensive and Responsive ASEAN Community and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework in 2020, in order to strengthen family role and engagement in achieving a peaceful, stable and prosperous ASEAN Community;

REITERATING the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter to enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN by providing them with equitable access to opportunities for human development, social welfare and justice, and to promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and Community-building;

ACKNOWLEDGING the crucial role of the institution of family, in accordance with our national laws, as a fundamental building block of society that provides the first line of care

and support for the nurturing of the resilience and development of its people;

RECOGNISING the family structure and its inherent strengths and capacities to provide a firm community foundation for the peoples of ASEAN to adapt to emerging developments, crises and to take on new opportunities;

MINDFUL of the impacts of the challenges affecting the institutions of family and community amongst others, due to violence within and outside the family, disaster and climate change, technological and digital revolution, economic recession and health crises such as pandemics;

NOTING further the need to address the challenges and barriers faced by families in order to honour and optimise their invaluable roles and contributions to community harmony, shared prosperity and nation-building;

UNDERSCORING that building family resilience requires caring, accepting, capable and resourceful communities that enable and empower families and their members to thrive and adapt to different forms of setbacks, crises and shocks;

STRESSING the need for cooperation among the ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders at all levels to highlight the importance of the family, foster family-community partnership, improve family engagement in community building and build resilient and open communities to achieve a greater sense of unity and solidarity within our nations, and in our ASEAN Community;

DO HEREBY:

AGREE to strengthen concerted efforts to promote the importance of family for community development and nation-building, as follows:

- a) Develop a whole-of-ASEAN strategy for a holistic family-centred approach that strengthens family well-being and development, family resilience and family solidarity to adapt to challenges, facing families and addresses emerging issues and concerns of families in general, such as through introducing “ASEAN Family Day” to be celebrated in May every year;
- b) Develop and enhance pro-family policies and legislation to strengthen the family institution, in accordance with prevailing national laws, policies and regulations. Such legislation and policies are aimed to protect and promote the interests of families in terms of the needs, risks and vulnerabilities of everyone in the family;
 - i) Facilitate investment in and access to quality family support, care, protection and development services to ensure that their essential needs for survival, resilience, self-reliance, and well-being are promoted, pursued and safeguarded;

- ii) Foster secure family life by reducing the incidence of poverty, exclusion and violence within and outside families in ASEAN while promoting acceptance, respect, harmony, constructive dialogue and togetherness;
- iii) Promote the establishment of community-based integrated care support systems to assist families as primary caregivers providing necessary protection, assistance and care services to children, elderly, women and individuals with special needs, thereby allowing the effective role of families in boosting community welfare, well-being, social protection, and nation-building;
- iv) Strengthen conducive support systems and structures particularly at the community level to leverage effective responses to address economic and social issues confronting families, taking into consideration the opportunities from the use of digital technology, innovation and connectivity, among others;
- v) Improve human and institutional capacities in multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary planning and evaluation, policy analysis and research, service delivery and capability-building for stakeholders with the active participation of families;
- vi) Develop strategies to support work-life harmony and shared responsibilities, and strengthen the family institution, such as through flexible working arrangements, employee support schemes and leave schemes, safe and supportive family environment among others;
- vii) Promote gender equality, including equal sharing of family responsibilities as well as the equal participation and contribution of women and men in family building and social development when formulating family and marriage related policies;
- viii) Strengthen family bonds through the pursuit of healthy lifestyles inculcating positive family values, mental health, effective communication and nurturing open and good mental health;
- ix) Foster cooperation in developing high-quality family-based or community-based social work services for people, especially disadvantaged groups with difficult circumstances, to contribute to strengthening family well-being and development;
- x) Enhance cooperation within ASEAN and its external partners in sharing experiences and successful lessons on family-related and marriage-related topics;

- xi) Promote lifelong learning in order to enhance family strengths;
- xii) Facilitate the protection of all members of family and community from any health pandemic and assistance for the sustainability and well-being of the family and community.

WE ENCOURAGE relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in the three ASEAN Community Pillars together with civil society organisations, academic institutions, private sector, community partners in ASEAN, to strengthen collaboration on the implementation of this Declaration, and **TASK** the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD), with the support of the Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD), to undertake measures to implement this commitment, including mobilising appropriate resources and systematic review of the implementation.

Adopted in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, this [] of October in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty One.