

## **JOINT STATEMENT ON PROMOTING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA AT THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM**

**WE**, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF), namely Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United States, Viet Nam and the High Representative of the European Union, on the occasion of the 26th ASEAN Regional Forum:

**CONCERNED** by the increasing threats to regional stability and prosperity posed by armed conflicts, and the increasing numbers of refugees and other displaced persons, particularly women and children;

**RECOGNIZING** that women's participation in peace and security decision-making leads to resilience against violence and more sustainable peace and security outcomes; the need to increase and promote women's representation and meaningful participation in peace operations, peace processes, post-conflict reconstruction, civilian protection, and military deployments; and that integrating a gender perspective increases the capability of missions and processes;

**UNDERSTANDING** that peace and security are pre-requisites for the achievement of prosperity and sustainable development;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which recognizes the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the increased occurrence of all forms of violence against women and girls, including but not limited to sexual violence, trafficking in persons, and exploitation prior to, during, and after armed conflict; and emphasizes the importance of women's equal, full and meaningful participation at all stages of peace processes given their necessary role in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping, as embodied in relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

**RECALLING** the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Vienna Declaration), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, in particular the intersection of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and SDG 16.

**BUILDING** on the regional commitments, as applicable, to the Women, Peace and Security agenda as expressed in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region (2004); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN (2013); the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (2015); the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children (2010); the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society (2017); the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals (2017); and the Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN (2017).

**HEREBY ENDEAVOUR TO COMMIT, IN THE SPIRIT OF SOLIDARITY, TO MAKING PROGRESS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

1. **INCREASE** the meaningful participation of women, including women's civil society organisations and networks implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, in the prevention, management, and resolution of armed conflict, and post-conflict peace building reconstruction and rehabilitation.
2. **BUILD** the capacity of women as peace builders, including as mediators and negotiators at the international, regional, national, and community levels as appropriate; in particular, through the promotion of the role of women as essential voices and active participants in society.
3. **ENGAGE** men and boys in support of women's empowerment within the broader Women, Peace and Security agenda, and to further engage with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in accordance with its mandate as launched during the ASEAN HeForShe Campaign on 30 November 2017.
4. **PREVENT**, respond to, and end all forms of violence, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated in armed conflict situations, particularly against civilians, including women and girls.
5. **SUPPORT** the role of women in promoting a culture of peace that educates and empowers all people; prevents armed conflicts; promotes the rule of law, and sustains peace through approaches that are comprehensive, cross-sectoral, and integrated.
6. **MEET** the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian settings, including the provision of the full range of accessible and affordable medical, legal, educational, psychosocial, housing, and livelihood services, in accordance with applicable laws and policies.
7. **CONTINUE** to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a way to address causes of armed conflicts, such as poverty; discrimination; social injustice; and the economic and/or social exclusion of persons and communities vulnerable to and at risk of instability and terrorism.
8. **STRIVE TO PROTECT** the rights of women and girls during and after armed conflict, including from discrimination and social exclusion by fostering a culture of inclusion.
9. **STRENGTHEN** the capacity of peacekeeping operations to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including by increasing deployment and meaningful participation of women at all levels, and incorporating the Women, Peace and Security agenda into the relevant planning and implementation of operations.
10. **LEVERAGE** ASEAN-led mechanisms and development partners to support the implementation of global commitments in advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda to better support the empowerment of women and girls in the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding.

11. **ENCOURAGE** political leadership to promote a greater balance in representation of women and men, and the integration of a gender perspective into the workings of our respective international security efforts addressing armed conflict.

12. **RAISE** awareness of the Women, Peace and Security agenda among policy-makers as well as the general public, and encourage inter-governmental discussions on issues of critical importance to the Women, Peace and Security agenda so as to share policy experiences, lessons learned and best practices, and identify ways of cooperation.

13. **PROMOTE** women's meaningful participation in all processes of prevention, management and resolution of armed conflicts and decision-making, and strengthen gender equality.

14. **ENCOURAGE** the adoption of national policies, national action plans, and efforts of regional frameworks aimed at raising public awareness of women's rights and the importance of their role and participation in peace processes, the resolution and prevention of armed conflict, and peacebuilding.

15. **SUPPORT** research, training, and sharing of gender-sensitive and disaggregated information within the ARF related to peace operations and/or stabilization initiatives, based upon a solid gender analysis and an integrated gender perspective to encourage best practices on matters of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

16. **TASK** ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) to provide recommendations regarding the Women, Peace and Security agenda within relevant ARF workplans, programs and processes, including inter-sessional meetings, workshops and other activities when relevant.

**Adopted on the Second of August in the Year Two Thousand and Nineteen (2019) at the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum in Bangkok, Thailand**

Statement Ends