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## **ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection**

**The Inter-Sectoral Consultation on the Development of a Plan of Action for the  
Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection**

**8-9 December 2014, Siem Reap, Cambodia**



## ASEAN DECLARATION ON STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION

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**WE**, the Heads of State/Government 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 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in Brunei Darussalam;

**REAFFIRMING** our commitment to build an ASEAN Community comprising three pillars, namely the ASEAN Political and Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community that are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing by 2015;

**GUIDED BY** the ASEAN Charter which sets out the purposes of ASEAN in particular 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;

**MINDFUL** the primary goal of the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community is to contribute to realising an ASEAN Community that is people-centred and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN by forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and harmonious where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced;

**RECALLING** the Cha-am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community (2009-2015) that recognised the role of social protection in enhancing the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN;

**FURTHER RECALLING** the collective commitments of ASEAN in, among others, the Bali Declaration on ASEAN Community in A Global Community of Nations; Cebu Declaration Towards One Caring and Sharing Community; ASEAN Human Rights Declaration; Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of the Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community; Proclamation of the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020): Towards an Inclusive Society; Joint Declaration and ASEAN Roadmap on the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in ASEAN; Brunei Darussalam Declaration on Strengthening Family Institution: Caring for the Elderly; Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children; Declaration on the Commitments for Children in ASEAN;

Resolution on the ASEAN Plan of Action for Children; Declaration on the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region; ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers; as well as in the work programmes of the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the commitments of individual ASEAN Member States to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and other related international instruments that ASEAN Member States are parties to;

**NOTING** the concept of “Regional Policy Advocacy on Social Protection: An Agenda for ASEAN Community 2015, Toward an ASEAN Social Protection Framework” initiated by Cambodia during the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council on 25 October 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; recommendations of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN GO-NGO Forum for Social Welfare and Development and 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) held on 20-22 September 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development, and 8<sup>th</sup> SOMSWD held on 12-14 September 2012 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, respectively, as well as recommendations of the Regional Workshop on Social Protection and Promoting Social Services for Vulnerable Groups held on 11 September 2012 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, as well as ILO Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, 2012 (No. 202);

## **DO HEREBY:**

### Principles

STRIVE to adhere to the following principles that are applied in accordance with the domestic laws and policies of respective ASEAN Member States, nationally-defined social protection and its national priorities, and adapted to the different contexts of ASEAN Member States:

1. Everyone, especially those who are poor, at risk, persons with disabilities, older people, out-of-school youth, children, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups, are entitled to have equitable access to social protection that is a basic human right and based on a rights-based/needs-based, life-cycle approach and covering essential services as needed;
2. Extending coverage, availability, quality, equitability and sustainability of social protection should be gradually promoted to ensure optimal benefits to the beneficiaries;

3. Social protection covers, but is not limited to, social welfare and development, social safety-nets, social insurance, social assistance, social services, in ASEAN Member States;
4. Implementation of social protection should be based on respect for fundamental freedoms, promotion and protection of human rights, promotion of social justice, social solidarity, non-discrimination, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, gender equality, social inclusiveness, coherence, and accountability;
5. Implementation of social protection towards progressive realisation in ASEAN Member States is the main responsibility of the respective governments based on national legislations, policies, programmes, strategies, standards and guidelines;
6. Social protection is a cross-cutting issue, hence its implementation requires coordinated and holistic approaches with the involvement of governments, private sectors, development partners, civil society, service providers, and other stakeholders, where appropriate;
7. Family unit and the community are an important element in supporting and delivering social protection services and therefore should be strengthened and preserved;
8. Inclusive and participatory approach should be ensured in the planning, programming and budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of social protection at all levels in the region to realise the strengthening of institutional capacity, transparency and responsiveness to the needs of those concerned;
9. Social protection is an investment in people that should be supported by adequate resources in order to empower them to meet their basic needs;
10. Social protection shall be adaptive to the different risks such as lifestyle and individual risks, social risks, and emerging risks and vulnerabilities faced by the region such as, but not limited to, changes in the economy and labour markets and impacts of climate change, disasters and economic crises.

### Strategies and Mechanisms

FURTHER STRIVE to foster the following concrete actions towards improved quality, coverage, and sustainability of social protection in ASEAN Member States subject to each ASEAN Member State's national policies and priorities and adapted to the different contexts of ASEAN Member States:

11. Support national policies, strategies and mechanisms to strengthen the implementation of social protection programme, as well as effective targeting systems to ensure social protection services would go to those most in need;
12. Advocate strategies that promote the coverage, availability, comprehensiveness, quality, equitability, affordability and sustainability of various social protection services, including the expansion of social insurance to the informal sector; strengthening social assistance programmes for persons with disabilities, elderly, children and other vulnerable groups; greater access to social protection programmes and services, including vocational trainings as part of active labour market interventions and human resource development;
13. Promote results-based and evidence-based national assessments and benchmarking of social protection delivery services in ASEAN Member States that would contribute to the progressive implementation, effective monitoring and evaluation, as well as optimum impact of social protection;
14. Explore and develop assessment tools and regional statistical indicators where appropriate to measure the impact of social protection to the holistic development of vulnerable groups for future planning towards available accurate baseline data collection;
15. Allocate adequate financial resources for social protection in line with national targets and subject to the capacity of each Government;
16. Strengthen the capacity of government officials, communities, service providers, and other stakeholders for better responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness of social protection and delivery services at regional, national and local levels;
17. Collectively accelerate the progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in all ASEAN Member States by strengthening capacity to assess and manage health systems to support UHC through sharing of experiences, information and experts;
18. Foster the involvement of the existing mechanisms of ASEAN sectoral bodies, including the ASEAN+3 Network on Universal Health Coverage, in promoting social protection in the region through projects and activities to support ASEAN Member States in fulfilling the social protection of the people, particularly the poor, persons with disabilities, older people, children and other vulnerable groups;
19. Promote multi-sectoral responsiveness of social protection through consultations, sharing of information on good practices and policies, knowledge management, cooperation, and coordination on social protection amongst the relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat. In this regard, the relevant ASEAN Ministerial Sectoral Bodies are tasked to convene an inter-sectoral regional consultation meeting involving SOMSWD, Senior Officials Meeting on Rural

Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE), Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD), Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM), ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), and ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), and other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies from the economic and political-security pillars should be convened regularly, as much as possible, to promote coordinated and holistic approach;

20. Assign the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD), with the support of SOMSWD, as the focal point for inter-sectoral cooperation on social protection at regional level, while acknowledging the different national coordinating mechanisms in ASEAN Member States;
21. Build and strengthen the networking and partnerships within and among ASEAN Member States as well as with Dialogue Partners, UN Agencies, civil society, private sectors, development partners, and other stakeholders in supporting adequate resources and effective implementation of the commitments reflected in this Declaration.

**ADOPTED** in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, this Ninth Day of October in the Year Two Thousand and Thirteen, in a single original copy, in the English Language.

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