

Engaging with ASEAN



A guide for
civil society organisations |



ENGAGING WITH ASEAN: A Guide for Civil Society Organisation

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Glossary and Abbreviations

ACW	ASEAN Committee on Women
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIA	ASEAN Investment Area
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management
AF	ASEAN Foundation
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AMM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
AMMRDPE	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
AMMSWD	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Social Welfare and Development
APA	ASEAN Peoples Assembly
APAST	ASEAN Plan of Action on Science and Technology
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASCOE	ASEAN Committee on Education
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUN	ASEAN University Network
AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
ASC	ASEAN Security Community
ASCC	ASEAN Socio-cultural Community
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
IAMMST	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
Link Body	SOM linked to affiliated NGO
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RDPE	Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
SOMRDPE	Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
SOMSWD	Senior Officials Meeting of Social Welfare and Development
SWD	Social Welfare and Development
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
VAP	Vientiane Action Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Overview and Executive Summary

This document updates the ICSW ASEAN briefing paper originally published in 2001. It aims to describe the history and evolution of ASEAN, describe the structures and mechanisms that guide the work of ASEAN, review some of the mechanisms for social development organisations to be involved at the level of ASEAN, and look at the opportunities for interaction between civil society organisations and ASEAN. It does not aim to be a critique of ASEAN but instead a ‘how to access ASEAN’ manual aimed at non-governmental and civil society organisations.

ASEAN was founded by five countries in 1967 and has now grown to 10 member countries with a vision of actively cooperating towards peace, stability, progress and prosperity in the region. The early declarations and statements from summits show that the group was founded primarily to provide a framework for regional political and economic cooperation.

In 1997, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Vision 2020 which outlined the new aspirations of ASEAN leaders. The vision identified a Southeast Asia Community that is:

- a concert of Southeast Asian nations that provides a zone of peace freedom and neutrality;
- a partnership in dynamic development to forge closer economic integration within ASEAN;
- a community of caring societies, conscious of ties with history, bound by cultural identity, where people enjoy equitable access to opportunities for human development, where hunger malnutrition, deprivation and poverty are no longer basic problems, civil society is empowered and social justice and the rule of law reign; and
- an outward looking ASEAN which played a pivotal role in international fora.

In moving towards the implementation of this vision, ASEAN has grown into a large structure with many levels of decision-making from Heads of State or Government to technical groupings. Discussions and decision-making are in the form of formal and informal meetings at each of these levels and Summits at the level of Heads of State. ASEAN leaders have

also adopted a framework comprising three fundamental communities:

- ASEAN Security Community (ASC);
- ASEAN Economic Community (AEC); and
- ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

The ASEAN Secretariat, which is based in Jakarta, acts as the administrative and operational organ of ASEAN. Headed by the ASEAN Secretary-General, the Secretariat is divided into three areas: Economic Cooperation; Functional Cooperation; and the Office of the Secretary-General. Work in each of these areas is coordinated by bodies of ASEAN officials in the respective fields, at Committee and Sub-Committee levels. The mechanisms which relate particularly to the social welfare field are the Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD), the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Poverty Eradication and Rural Development (SOMRDPE) and the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW).

The work of these committees is guided by several plans of action, in particular the Vientiane Action Programme (2004 – 2010) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Plan of Action (ASCC, adopted 2004). In the social welfare field, the implementation of the ASCC is supported by the:

- Framework for the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population (2003 – 2006);
- Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2004 – 2010); and
- Workplan on Women’s Advancement and Gender Equality (2005 – 2010).

ASEAN as an organisation has previously had little engagement with civil society organisations, especially in the development of plans of action and decision-making at all levels. However, the Vientiane Action Programme provides much greater opportunity for NGOs to have meaningful participation with ASEAN in the future. There are presently 54 NGOs accredited to ASEAN. Many of the NGOs are technical-oriented or special-interest groups. Only a few are directly related to the work on social development.

Establishment of ASEAN

Establishment and Membership

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok by five original Member Countries, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined on 8 January 1984, Vietnam joined on 28 July 1995, Laos and Myanmar (Burma) joined on 23 July 1997 and after a brief delay due to internal conflicts, Cambodia joined on 30 April 1999.

The document that affirms the establishment of ASEAN is the ASEAN Declaration of 1967. The ASEAN Declaration made clear that the 'Association is open for participation to all States in the South East Asian region subscribing to the aforementioned aims, principles and purposes'. It further stated that 'the Association represents the collective will of the nations of South East Asia to bind themselves together in friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure for their peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity'.

The ASEAN region now has a population of over 500 million, a total area of 4.5 million square kilometers and a total trade of over US\$1 trillion.

ASEAN Objectives

The ASEAN declaration of 1967 states seven aims and purposes of the Association. These are:

- 'to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian nations;
- to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for the justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries in the region and the adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;

- to provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;
- to collaborate more effectively for the greater utilization of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communication facilities and the raising of the living standards of their peoples;
- to promote South East Asian studies
- to maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.'

Fundamental Principles

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, signed at the First ASEAN Summit on 24 February 1976, declared that in their relations with one another, the High Contracting Parties should be guided by the following fundamental principles:

- Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;
- The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
- Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
- Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
- Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
- Effective cooperation among themselves.

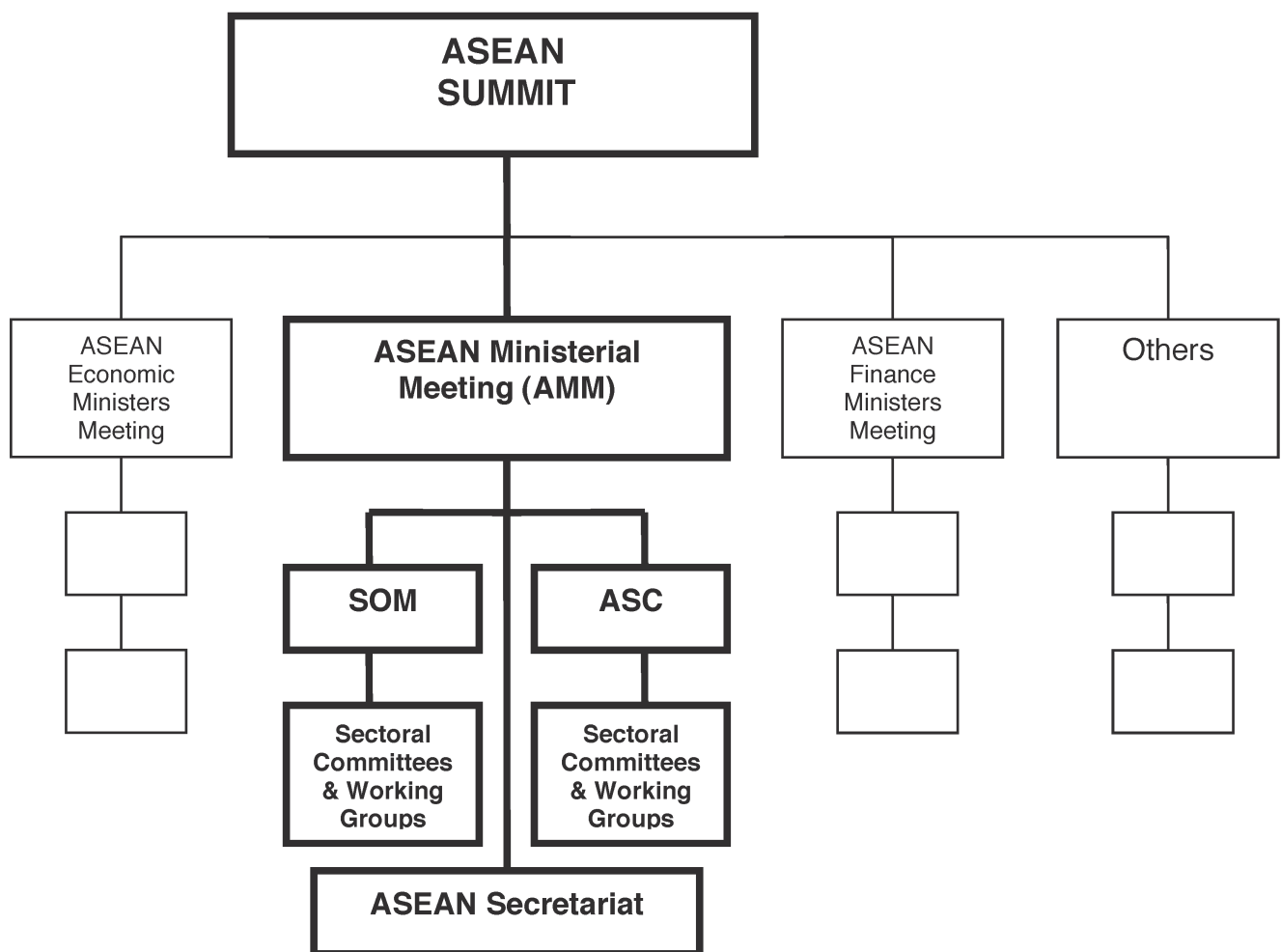
This treaty has been accepted by a growing number of countries outside Southeast Asia. To date, the following countries have acceded to the treaty: Papua New Guinea (1989), China (2003), India (2003), Japan (2004), Pakistan (2004), Republic of Korea (2004), Russia (2004) and Australia (2005). [For key documents including the Treaty of Amity see: www.aseansec.org/145.htm].

Structures and Mechanisms

ASEAN Summit

The highest decision making organ of ASEAN is the Meeting of the ASEAN Heads of State and Government. This meeting is convened every year. Hosting of the summits follows alphabetical rotation.

The Summit is informed by ASEAN Ministerial Meetings, ASEAN Economic Ministers meetings and ASEAN Finance Ministers Meetings. There are also other meetings for special activities. For the Social Welfare Sector, the key decision making body are the ASEAN Ministerial Meetings, and the corresponding Committees of Senior Officials and Technical Groups which support it.



SOM: Senior Officials Meeting

ASC: ASEAN Standing Committee

ASEAN Ministerial Meetings

The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) is an annual meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers which is next to the ASEAN Summit in the level of decision-making. There is much publicity around the meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and usually a declaration or Joint Communiqué is produced at the end of the meeting.

Ministerial meetings on several other sectors are also held, although the Foreign Ministers' Meeting still seems to be the meeting given the most attention. The other ministerial meetings include: agriculture and forestry, economics, energy, environment, finance, higher education, information, investment, labour, law, regional haze, rural development and poverty alleviation, science and technology, social welfare, transnational crime, transportation, tourism, youth, as well as meetings of the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) Council, and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) Council.

ASEAN Standing Committee

The ASEAN Standing Committee is composed of the Directors-General of the ASEAN Departments of the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The Directors-General meet as a body 'standing in' for the ASEAN Foreign Ministers who meet annually in the AMM. Chairmanship of the ASEAN Standing Committee rotates annually in concomitance with the hosting of the AMM.

The ASEAN Standing Committee reports directly to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers who in turn report to the Heads of State/Government.

Committees of Senior Officials and Technical Groups

Supporting these ministerial bodies are 29 committees of senior officials and 122 technical working groups. The committees of senior officials are called Senior Officials Meetings (SOM), meeting regularly during

the year or on an *ad hoc* basis preparing for events or other higher-level meetings.

The committees which relate particularly to the social welfare field are the Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD), the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) and the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW).

ASEAN has several specialised bodies and arrangements promoting inter-governmental cooperation in various fields. These are the ASEAN University Network, ASEAN-EC Management Centre, ASEAN Centre for Energy, ASEAN Agricultural Development Planning Centre, ASEAN Earthquake Information Centre, ASEAN Poultry Research Training Centre, ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation, ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre, ASEAN Tourism Information Centre and ASEAN Timber Technology Centre.

In addition, ASEAN promotes cooperative activities with organisations with related aims and purposes such as ASEAN-Chambers of Commerce and Industry, ASEAN Business Forum, ASEAN Tourism Association, ASEAN Council on Petroleum, ASEAN Ports Association, ASEAN Vegetable Oils Club and the ASEAN-Institute for Strategic and International Studies.

Parallel or Advisory Structures & Groups

Track II

A second level of work and discussions has been in effect within ASEAN in the form of Track II organisations composed of mostly of academics, think tanks and scholars, media, business people and government officials in their private capacity. Most of the work of Track II officials are on foreign affairs policies, regional peace and security issues and the promotion of confidence building measures.

One of the initiatives of Track II related to civil society is ASEAN People's Assembly [see page 20].

Dialogue Partners and International Organisations

In the past ASEAN has encouraged and initiated cooperation with dialogue partners (governments from outside the region) and international organisations such as donors, trade groups and financial institutions. Bilateral and multilateral relations with various governments and international organisations have been developed and strengthened through the years and through several agreements and plans of action. Universities and research organisations become partners for specific projects when the concerned committee or sub-committee implements plans of action. Civil society organisations can become involved with the ASEAN in particular aspects of plans of action [see pages 15-17 & 19-20].

ASEAN Secretariat

In support of the work of ASEAN, the Permanent Secretariat was established in February 1976. This was later referred to as the ASEAN Secretariat. The Secretariat has its seat in Jakarta, Indonesia and is headed by the Secretary-General. The Host Country (Indonesia) grants to the Secretariat, the Secretary-General and the staff, privileges and immunities for the performance of their duties and functions.

The Secretary-General

The Secretary-General is appointed by ASEAN Foreign Ministers upon nomination by a member country on a rotational basis in alphabetical order. The tenure for the Secretary-General is five years, which may be extended. The Secretary-General of ASEAN is appointed on merit and accorded ministerial status. The Secretary-General is mandated to initiate, advise, coordinate and implement ASEAN activities. The members of the professional staff of the ASEAN Secretariat are appointed on the principle of open recruitment and region-wide competition.

Other Staff

Other staff of the ASEAN secretariat include: 2

Deputy Secretaries-General, 4 Bureau Directors, 14 Assistant Directors and Coordinators, 23 Senior Officers, 27 Technical Officers, 28 Technical Assistants that may be deemed necessary. There is a total of 99 mandated staff in the organisation.

Website

The Secretariat has developed a webpage providing all key ASEAN documents and detailed information on ASEAN functions [<http://www.aseansec.org>].

ASEAN Vision & Policy Framework

In 1997, ASEAN adopted ASEAN Vision 2020 which outlined the aspirations of ASEAN leaders to be achieved by 2020. The vision identified a Southeast Asia community that is:

1. A Concert of Southeast Asian Nations providing a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. This includes a free and stable ASEAN where causes of conflict had been eliminated and disputes resolved through peaceful means; a region free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; and an effective use of human and natural resources for development and prosperity.

2. A partnership in dynamic development to forge closer economic integration within ASEAN. This includes creating a region with a free flow of goods, service and investments, a freer flow of capital, equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities.

3. A community of caring societies which is conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural heritage and bound by a regional identity. This includes an ASEAN where all people enjoy equitable access to opportunities for human development regardless of gender, race, religion, language, or social and cultural background; where hunger, malnutrition, deprivation and poverty are no longer basic problems; and where civil society is empowered and social justice and the rule of law reign.

4. An outward-looking ASEAN playing a pivotal role in international fora, and advancing ASEAN's common interests. An ASEAN having intensified relationships with Dialogue Partners [see page 12] and other regional bodies based on equal partnership and mutual respect.

To meet this vision, ASEAN leaders adopted a framework comprising the following three fundamental communities plus an external relations function to strengthen relationships outside ASEAN:

- ASEAN Security Community (ASC)
- ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)
- ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)
- External relations.

Programmes under each of these areas are governed and guided by several operating treaties, declarations, accords, statements and plans of action. The current plan of action is the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) [Annex 1]. This builds on and succeeds the Hanoi Action Plan and defines the ASEAN workplan from 2004 – 2010. The VAP provides considerably more opportunities for engagement by NGOs, notably within the framework of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

ASEAN Security Community

Political and Security Cooperation

Two of the main treaties guiding the work on political cooperation are the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia which is a legally binding instrument aimed at promoting perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation in the region; and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEANWFZ) which aims to strengthen confidence building measures in Southeast Asia and to foster worldwide disarmament. There are also parallel ASEAN structures that address political and security issues in the region.

ASEAN Regional Forum

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was formed in accordance with the 1992 Singapore Declaration of the ASEAN Summit where the ASEAN Heads of State and Government declared their intention to intensify dialogues with external partners on political and security matters.

ARF has then continued to develop as a multi-lateral forum for political and security consultations and cooperation. The ARF consists of the 10 ASEAN member states, the 12 ASEAN Dialogue Partners and 1 ASEAN Observer. It is a forum to discuss issues of security and foreign policy in the region. There are two 'tracks' for the discussion on these issues: the first track which covers the formal meetings such as the annual ARF Foreign Ministers' Meeting and SOM, and the second track that covers non-official, non-formal seminars and workshops. Issues under the purview of ARF have included denuclearization of the

Koran Peninsula, counter-terrorism measures, illicit drugs, piracy, people smuggling and human trafficking, transnational crime and HIV/AIDS.

Other work under Political Cooperation includes the organisation of the ASEAN Summit, political consultations and cooperation with the United Nations agencies such as UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF. However, ASEAN as a body, does not as yet have a seat in the United Nations assembly.

Policy of Non-Interference

The most controversial and yet most defended policy of ASEAN is the policy of non-interference that has been in effect ever since the founding of the regional organisation. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have strongly criticised it, ASEAN governments have strongly defended it. The policy maintains that a country's internal affairs are its own affair and will not allow any other country to meddle unless that country specifically requests it. Although CSOs have called for a review of this policy because it impedes decision making and action on critical issues, ASEAN member governments maintain that it is important to keep the policy of non-interference to promote confidence-building and preserve state sovereignty. There has, however, been a small shift in the implementation of this policy. Most notably, foreign ministers have raised concerns about the situation in Myanmar and an ASEAN Inter-parliamentary Caucus has also been established to monitor these issues [see: www.aseanmp.org].

ASEAN Economic Community

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) aims to create a stable, prosperous and highly competitive region, functioning as a single market and production base by 2020. The aim is to have a free flow of goods, service and skilled labour, and a freer flow of capital, along with equitable economic development, and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities within and across its Member Countries.

Areas under the AEC include:

- Finance
- Trade
- Investment
- Industry
- Services
- Electronic Commerce
- Transport and Communications
- Energy
- Development of Growth Areas
- Tourism
- Intellectual Property
- Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
- Food, Agriculture and Forestry

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

ASEAN has the following vision for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community ASCC:

- 'Equitable access to opportunities will be universal — rising above the barriers of religion, race, language, gender and social and cultural background'
- 'Human potentials are nurtured to the fullest'
- 'Norms of social and distributive justice are upheld by addressing issues of poverty and equity, and special care is given to vulnerable groups — children, youth, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities'
- 'The environment and natural resources are protected and managed to sustain development and as a legacy for future generations'
- 'Civil society is engaged in providing inputs for policy choices'
- 'People are healthy in mind and body and living in harmony in safe environments'
- 'ASEAN citizens interact in a community conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural heritage and bound by a common regional identity'

The ASCC is supported by implementing frameworks and workplans. For social welfare, key frameworks and workplans are the Framework for the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population (2003 – 2006), the Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2004 – 2010) and the Workplan on Woman's Advancement and Gender Equality (2005 – 2010). [see pages 15-17].

External Relations

In the past ASEAN has encouraged and initiated cooperation with dialogue partners (governments from outside the region) and international organisations such as donors, trade groups and financial institutions. Bilateral and multilateral relations with various governments and international organisations have been developed and strengthened through the years and through several agreements and plans of action. Universities and research organisations become partners for specific projects when the concerned committee or sub-committee implements plans of action. Civil society organisations have also become involved with ASEAN in particular aspects of plans of action.

In particular, ASEAN has active relations with the following Dialogue Partners:

- ASEAN Plus 3
- ASEAN-Australia
- ASEAN-Canada
- ASEAN-China
- ASEAN-EU
- ASEAN-India
- ASEAN-Japan
- ASEAN-Republic of Korea
- ASEAN-New Zealand
- ASEAN-Russia
- ASEAN-United States
- ASEAN-UNDP
- ASEAN-Pakistan (sectoral dialogue)

The ASEAN Plus Three process is where the ASEAN Heads of State and Government meet with their counterparts from China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The agenda of the meetings in the ASEAN Plus Three revolve around economic and trade issues. The ASEAN Plus Three meetings usually fall parallel to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting every year.

In the recent years, there have also been communications with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Gulf Cooperation Council, the Rio Group, South Pacific Forum, Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Andean Community and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. ASEAN also maintains close collaboration with the UN specialized agencies in their respective fields, such as WHO (health matters), UNAIDS (HIV/AIDS), UNDCP (drug control), UNICEF (children's matters), UNIFEM (women's matters). Recently, the Fifth Consultative Meeting Among Executive Heads of Sub-regional Organisations and ESCAP identified nodal officers at the ESCAP, ASEAN and SAARC Secretariats to coordinate initiatives in the areas of international and regional trade policy, e-commerce; social development, the environment, and statistics, among others.

These multilateral and bilateral relations are strengthened by meetings when and where possible, where various regional and international issues are discussed and plans of collaboration clarified or developed.

ASEAN Charter

In 2005, the ASEAN Heads of State also committed to establishing an ASEAN Charter. This will serve as a legal and institutional framework and codify ASEAN norms, rules and values of ASEAN and will reaffirm principles, goals and ideals contained in ASEAN's milestone agreements.

These include among others:

- 'Promotion of community interest for the benefit of all ASEAN Member Countries;

- Maintaining primary driving force of ASEAN;
- Narrowing the development gaps among Member Countries;
- Adherence to a set of common socio-cultural and political community values and shared norms as contained in the various ASEAN documents;
- Continuing to foster a community of caring societies and promote a common regional identity;
- Effective implementation as well as compliance with ASEAN's agreements;
- Promotion of democracy, human rights and obligations, transparency and good governance and strengthening democratic institutions;
- Ensuring that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment;
- Decision making on the basis of equality, mutual respect and consensus;
- Commitment to strengthen ASEAN's competitiveness, to deepen and broaden ASEAN's internal economic integration and linkages with the world economy;
- Promotion of regional solidarity and cooperation;
- Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all nations;
- Renunciation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and avoidance of arms race;
- Renunciation of the use of force and threat to use of force; non-aggression and exclusive reliance on peaceful means for the settlement of differences or disputes;
- Enhancing beneficial relations between ASEAN and its friends and partners;
- Upholding non-discrimination of any ASEAN Member Countries in ASEAN's external relations and cooperative activities;
- Observance of principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States; and
- The right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion and non-interference in the internal affairs of one another'.

Social Welfare and ASEAN

The Vientiane Action Programme 2004 – 2010 (VAP), agreed at the 2004 ASEAN Summit in Vientiane, provides new opportunities for participation by NGOs [Annex 1]. It succeeds and builds on the Hanoi Action Plan and provides significantly greater potential for civil society engagement. In the social welfare field, implementation of the VAP is guided by the **ASEAN Social-Cultural Community (ASCC) Plan of Action** [Annex 2].

The ASCC Plan of Action has four core elements:

- **Building a community of caring societies** to address issues of poverty, equity and human development;
- **Managing the social impact of economic integration** by building a competitive human resource base and adequate systems of social protection;
- **Enhancing environmental sustainability** and sound environmental governance; and
- **Strengthening the foundations** of regional social cohesion towards an ASEAN Community in 2020.

ASEAN has identified key entry points to achieve these goals:

- **Health.** Priorities include management of infectious diseases such as dengue, cholera, tuberculosis, typhoid fever and HIV/AIDS.
- **Labour and employment.** Directed by ASEAN Senior Labour Officials, priorities include mutual skills recognition, an industrial relations framework and an Occupational Safety and Health Network.
- **Social welfare and development.** Directed by ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD), supported by the Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and guided by Framework for the ASEAN Work Program on Social Welfare, Family and Population. Priorities include capacity building in the social sector and strengthening regional cooperation and the role of the family, community and civil society [see pages 15-16].
- **Youth.** Priorities include strengthening youth employment.
- **Women.** Directed by ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and guided by the Declaration on

the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region. Priorities include integration, participation, protection and promotion of women [See pages 16-17].

- **Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.** Directed by ASEAN Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE) and supported by the Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) and guided by the RDPE Action Plan. Priorities include globalization, narrowing the digital divide and development gap, social protection, employment and income generation, partnerships and decentralisation [See pages 15-16].
- **Education.** Directed by the Senior Officials on Education (SOM-ED) and the ASEAN University Network (AUN), priorities include complementing ongoing regional initiatives to promote ASEAN awareness, solidarity and identity in education institutions.
- **Environment.** Directed by ASEAN Environment Ministers and guided by the ten priority areas for regional cooperation, namely: priorities are global environment issues, land and forest fires and transboundary haze pollution; coastal and marine environment; nature conservation and biodiversity; integrated water resources management; public awareness and environmental education; promotion of environmentally sound technologies; urban environmental management and governance; and sustainable development, monitoring, reporting/ database harmonization.
- **Disaster Management.** Directed by the Special ASEAN leaders meetings and the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) it aims to establish regional mechanisms on disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation.
- **Science and Technology.** Directed by ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology (IAMMST) and guided by the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science and Technology (APAST), it aims to strengthen science and technology cooperation within ASEAN.
- **Culture and Information.** Aims to enhance mutual understanding and solidarity among the ASEAN community, further regional development, and effectively project ASEAN within and outside the region.

Frameworks and Workplans

The ASCC is underpinned by frameworks and workplans which provide the implementation strategy for the ASCC Plan of Action. For social welfare organisations, the key frameworks and workplans where NGOs can participate are the following:

1. Framework for the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population (2003 – 2006) [Annex 3]
2. Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2004 – 2010) [Annex 4]
3. Work Plan on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (2005 – 2010) [Annex 5]

Reports on implementation of each of the frameworks occur yearly to the respective committees responsible for management of the programs.

1. Framework for the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population (2003 – 2006)

The framework is developed by the ASEAN Secretariat in coordination with the Senior Officials Meeting of Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD). The SOMSWD meets yearly (normally around November). The final framework is discussed, amended and ratified by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) which meets every two years (directly after the SOMSWD meeting).

The 2003-2006 framework identifies the following specific objectives:

- To strengthen and intensify regional cooperation in enhancing the role of families, communities, civil society (including non-governmental organizations), the private sector and the government in managing social problems, meet human needs and maximise opportunities for development;
- To enhance capacity for anticipating and managing the social consequences of rapid demographic, political, social and economic changes, especially in the context of trade liberalization and globalisation;

- To promote the use of developmental as well as participatory approaches in helping the marginalised and disadvantaged to become independent and to facilitate their integration into society; and
- To enhance the capacity of social welfare/social development ministries to mainstream social concerns into the national development agenda

To meet these objectives, the framework also identifies strategies and priority program areas including recommendations for specific project implementation. Programs cover policy research, regional networking, training (including exchange of trainees and experts), and advocacy/public information.

2. Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication

The priority areas for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (RDPE) are:

- Globalisation
- Narrowing the Digital Divide, promoting the use of ICT as a tool
- Social Protection
- Employment and Income-generation
- Partnerships, Decentralisation, Local Participation
- Narrowing the Development Gap

Globalisation

These include a study on the social cost of realising an ASEAN economic community; policy reviews to develop fast-track approach to fight poverty (including social protection policies and social investments); preparation of a Southeast Asia Human Development Report; enhancing poverty monitoring systems; and capacity development on risk and vulnerability indicators.

Narrowing the Digital Divide, promoting the use of ICT as a tool

Regional activities would focus on enhancing IT awareness and utilisation among the rural populace in ASEAN countries, to facilitate the transition from

traditional agro-based communities into those adequately prepared for regional economic integration.

Social Protection

Priorities include:

- capacity-building of civil society organisations in social services delivery;
- increasing the involvement of non-governmental and civil society organisations;
- facilitating adjustment to economic restructuring (pro-active social protection).

Other recommended activities are:

- Assessing the social protection needs of individual member countries based on vulnerabilities beyond those linked to industrial restructuring;
- Strengthening and establishing effective capacity of civil society organisations and private sectors groups not only for social services delivery, but more prominently for facilitating and intensifying local community and/or local government roles in social safety and protection;
- Enhancing analysis and interpretation of data and statistics on poverty;

Employment and Income-generation

Priorities include:

- Microfinance
- Economic entrepreneurship
- Development of rural enterprises
- Productive economic activities
- Market networking
- Job training

Partnerships, Decentralisation, Local Participation

Priorities include:

- Strengthen in-country capacity across sectors involved in rural development and poverty eradication to promote local participation;
- Develop activities that facilitate active involvement of all rural development stakeholders in policy

formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Narrowing the Development Gap

The priority is to increase closer regional integration of ASEAN countries through:

- Facilitating regional networking among governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector, business sector and research institutes;
- Sharing of information, best practices, lessons learnt, research capacity and technical expertise;
- Developing a regional rural volunteer programme;
- Promoting greater public awareness on the need to accelerate rural development and poverty eradication.

3. Workplan on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality

The first meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) was held in October 2002. The ACW workplan gives affect to the Vientiane Action Programme which recommends the following regional measures that will:

- Promote equitable participation of women in the development process by eliminating all forms of discrimination against them;
- Implement the eight goals of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region;
- Strengthen regional collaboration in programmes to combat trafficking in women and children;
- Develop and implement an ASEAN Work Plan on Women's Advancement Agenda in politics;
- Conduct skills training for out-of-school youth and disadvantaged women;
- Increase women's access to micro-credit, information systems and basic social services.

Priority Areas identified by ACW are:

1. Integration and Participation of Women
2. Protection of Women
3. Addressing Challenges of Globalisation

4. Promoting Employability of Women

Integration and Participation of Women

Activities:

- Promote regional awareness and strengthen capacity on gender mainstreaming, including within the relevant ASEAN committees and ASEAN Secretariat;
- Intensify collaboration with the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations (ACWO) to address important women's concerns in ASEAN, including the feminisation of poverty;
- Strengthen capacity for research and information-gathering, particularly quantitative information that is disaggregated by sex and age, and including indicators used to monitor activities for gender equality and advancement;
- Document best practices/ innovative strategies undertaken by ASEAN countries to mainstream gender in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of policies and legislation; and
- Increase the participation of women in all aspects of ASEAN activities.

Protection of Women

Activities:

- Strengthen regional capacity to follow-up the recommendations of the 2002 Workshop on Gender-Based Violence;
- Work with UN organisations, in particular UNIFEM, to promote the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region, and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- Document ASEAN experiences/lessons/ best practices in addressing gender-based violence;
- Strengthen management information system on incidence of gender-based violence in all ASEAN countries.
- Implement the eight priorities of the Declaration on Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region.

Addressing Challenges of Globalisation

Activities:

Develop and intensify research capacity on the negative impact of globalisation on women's lives in order to have an effective understanding and identify subsequent measures of change.

Support the strengthening of capacities to:

- Implement strategies to improve women's access, participation, control and benefit to micro-credit, information systems, basic social services such as education and health care, to bridge the gender gap;
- Implement advocacy and training programmes as well as transparent and well-defined processes to enable women migrant workers to be well-informed and prepared for work overseas so as to avoid the potential danger of becoming victims of violence, abuse, or trafficking;
- Implement strategies – in consultation with the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials – to address the impact of trade liberalisation on women, including issues on working conditions, vulnerabilities and differences that women have in the formal labour market;
- Put in place multi-sectoral programmes addressing the need for boosting employability and livelihood management skills of women as a means of assisting women's access, participation, control and benefit of economic opportunities and long-term economic wellbeing of women.

Promoting Employability of Women

Activities:

- Support formulation of policies and action plans in each ASEAN Member Country to promote skills training and provide opportunities for self-employment and micro-enterprise for women.

There are several entry points where NGOs can engage with ASEAN. These include:

1. Affiliation with ASEAN
2. Engagement with ASEAN Secretariat
3. Parallel Meetings, Regional Working Groups and other Initiatives
4. ASEAN Foundation
5. ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism

Civil Society Engagement with ASEAN

There are several entry points where NGOs can engage with ASEAN. These include:

1. Affiliation with ASEAN
2. Engagement with ASEAN Secretariat
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4. ASEAN Foundation
5. ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism

1. Affiliation with ASEAN

ASEAN has developed ‘Guidelines for ASEAN Relations with Civil Society Organisations’ which includes criteria for consideration for applications [Annex 6]. Some of the criteria are:

- As a general rule, only a CSO whose membership is confined to the ASEAN nationals may be considered for affiliation with ASEAN;
- Approval of application for affiliation of a CSO with ASEAN shall be based primarily upon the assessment of the positive contribution which such a CSO could make to the enhancement, strengthening and realisation of the aims and objectives of ASEAN;
- Affiliation status with ASEAN may not be granted to a CSO if it has objectives, activities or projects which are contrary to or inconsistent with the aims and objectives of ASEAN embodied in the Bangkok Declaration and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord;
- The objectives of the CSO’s activities should contribute towards achieving community building that is in line with one or more of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community – the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community; and
- A CSO whose membership comes from a relatively even spread of the ASEAN Member Countries may be allowed affiliation, provided that ASEAN is satisfied that the CSO merits affiliation and the non-participating Member Countries have given their consent to the CSO and provided further that membership shall remain open for other Member

Countries.

The guidelines define the main objectives of affiliation as being:

- To draw the CSOs into the mainstream of ASEAN activities so that they are kept informed of major policies, directives and decisions of ASEAN and are given the opportunity and the privilege of participating in ASEAN activities;
- To ensure interaction and fruitful relationships between the existing ASEAN bodies and the CSOs; and
- To help promote the development of a people-centred ASEAN Community.

Of the 54 CSOs only a few can be identified as related to work on social development. These are:

- Committee for ASEAN Youth Cooperation (CAYC), Malaysia
- ASEAN Confederation of Women’s Organisations (ACWO), Singapore
- ASEAN NGOs for the Prevention of Drugs and Substance Abuse, Malaysia
- ASEAN NGO Coalition on Aging in Chiang Mai, Thailand
- Southeast Asia Regional Institute for Community and Education (SEARICE), Philippines
- Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA)

Affiliate privileges

The guidelines also outline the following privileges of an affiliated CSO:

Use of ASEAN name

- It may use the name ‘ASEAN’ and display the official ASEAN emblem in correspondence and communications and its official meetings so long as the displaying of such emblem is non-commercial in nature.

Presentation on policy issues

- It may submit written statements or recommendations and views on policy matters or on significant events or regional or international concerns, to the ASEAN Standing Committee through the ASEAN Secretariat.
- It may initiate programmes of activities for presentation to its link body for appropriate action (for social welfare organisations these are likely to be SOMSWD or SOMRDPE).
- At the discretion of the Chairman of the link body, it may attend meetings of the link body for consultation on matters and issues of direct concern to the CSO.

Access to project funding

- It may submit its own project proposals for Third Party funding to be channelled through the ASEAN Secretariat to the Standing Committee for approval.

Access for research

- For purposes of doing research for its projects, it may be allowed access to ASEAN documents on a selective basis in consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat of its link body.
- Subject to rules and regulations, it may be allowed use of the facilities of the ASEAN Secretariat for its official meetings and other official activities in Jakarta.
- The ASEAN Secretariat shall provide CSOs with key ASEAN publications every year.

2. Engagement with ASEAN Secretariat

Key to working with ASEAN is engagement with the ASEAN Secretariat. The Secretariat is the initial author of the action plans and framework documents in coordination with the Senior Officials Meetings (SOMs). These plans are amended and ratified at the relevant ministerial meetings for final approval at the ASEAN Summit.

The Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and the Senior Officials Meeting of Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) meet around November every year to discuss and develop the plans presented by the Secretariat. The respective ministerial meetings: the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE) meet every two years directly after the SOM meetings.

Opportunities exist for engagement with the Secretariat on several levels.

Participation in existing plans and projects.

The Social Welfare and Development (SWD), Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (RDPE) frameworks and Women's Advancement and Gender Equality Workplan [pages 15-17] include a project implementation strategy in which NGOs can participate. The frameworks and plans include both planned and proposed projects that the Secretariat monitors, facilitates and sometimes manages. The Secretariat also provides a yearly update (for presentation to the SOMSWD and SOMRDPE) on the status of the projects which can assist NGOs in identifying potential opportunities to engage including becoming a project implementing partner. Funding for ASEAN projects may be available from the ASEAN Foundation [see below].

Participation in GO – NGO forum

As part of the VAP plans to increase participation of NGOs, the SOMSWD is establishing a GO – NGO Forum (Governmental / Non-governmental Forum). The first of these forums is timetabled for 2006 and provides a good opportunity for social welfare organisations to both identify opportunities in existing programs and also to influence the development of future plans.

Input into new action plans, frameworks and projects

The present Framework for Social Welfare and

Development (SWD) is valid from 2003 – 2006. In November 2006 the SOMSWD will be discussing and recommending a new Framework for Social Welfare and Development for ratification in the 2007 meeting of the AMMSWD. NGOs have an opportunity to influence the content of this framework. Affiliated NGOs can provide written submissions to the Secretariat, arrange to make a presentation to the SOMSWD, and participate in the GO – NGO Forum.

Input will also be possible into future Frameworks for RDPE (2004 – 2010) and the Workplan on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (2004 – 2010).

Country Action Plans

To realize the regionally identified goals under the ASEAN action plans, each ASEAN Member Country may develop project or activity proposals to be implemented as a regional action. To ensure inclusiveness, NGOs should be able to assist the country focal points to develop these proposals. This can be done through interaction and participation with the appropriate country ministry. Through such liaison and links, NGOs may also have the opportunity to participate in events and meetings planned by an ASEAN Member Country as part of the implementation of the project.

3. Parallel Meetings, Regional Working Groups and Other Initiatives

Aside from accreditation as a CSO to ASEAN, many civil society organisations have opted to plan parallel meetings to the high-level ASEAN meetings or form working groups on broad or specific issues related to ASEAN. Following are some examples.

ASEAN Civil Society Conference

The most recent initiative is the Civil Society Conference which was a parallel meeting of NGOs during the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in December 2005. The conference attracted broad representation and was the first time that civil society

was given the opportunity to address the Summit leaders with their concerns. It is anticipated that this Civil Society Conference will become an annual event timetabled to take place alongside the ASEAN Summit. The civil society statement from this conference is attached. [Annex 7].

The Southeast Asia Committee for Advocacy (SEACA)

This Committee was convened for the first time in October 2005 with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat. It organized a regional conference on Civil Society Engagement in ASEAN, in Bangkok.

The ASEAN People's Assembly (APA)

The APA meets yearly and is organised by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in cooperation with the Singapore Institute of International Affairs and the various ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS). The organisers of the APA are from Track II organisations, consisting of government, mainstream academe, business and media. There are no civil society representatives or NGO representatives in Track II.

The goals of the APA are, among others, to promote mutual understanding and tolerance for the diversity of culture, religion, ethnicity, social values, political structures and processes, and other elements of ASEAN's diversity among broader sectors of the ASEAN population; and to obtain insights or inputs on how to deal with socioeconomic problems affecting ASEAN societies from as many relevant sectors of ASEAN societies as possible.

The ASEAN People's Forum (APF)

The APF was an initiative which was spearheaded by the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia). It had been convened parallel to a high-level meeting of the ASEAN, whether the ASEAN Summit (formal or informal) or the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. In 1998, the APF was held in Bangkok, 1999 in Manila, in 2000 in Singapore and again in Bangkok in 2001.

4. ASEAN Foundation

The ASEAN Foundation was established with the following objectives:

- ‘To promote greater awareness of ASEAN and greater interaction among the people’s of ASEAN as well as their wider participation in ASEAN’s activities *inter alia* through human resources development that will enable them to realise their full potential and capacity to contribute to the progress of ASEAN as productive and responsible members of society’
- ‘To contribute to the evolution of a development cooperation strategy that promotes mutual assistance, equitable economic development and the alleviation of poverty.’

The work of the ASEAN Foundation (AF) is focused on human resources development or projects such as education, training, seminars, workshops, exchanges, network building, fellowships, and information dissemination. Academic and cultural institutions and non-governmental organisations recognised by ASEAN are eligible for assistance from the Foundation.

The AF has a specific project proposal format, allowable project costs, disbursement procedures, and project activation requirements including financial and accounting procedures, accountability and progress reports in a manual that is available to interested organisations. It has a project cycle calendar of approximately six months – from the submission of projects up to their approval for implementation. There are roughly two project cycles in one calendar year.

Established in December 1998, the AF is fully operational with relations both with governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations. It funds a variety of projects such as education, training, seminars, workshops, exchanges, network-building, fellowships and information dissemination. The projects funded are not only those of the ASEAN Secretariat. Funding and application guidelines are available. [see: www.aseansec.org/99.htm].

5. ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism

In 1996, a group of high-level academics, NGO leaders, former and incumbent parliamentarians formed the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism and has been engaging ASEAN member countries in a dialogue to establish the structures for this at the regional and national level. One prerequisite to the formation of the ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism is the formation of a national human rights commission in each of the ASEAN member countries. As of 2006, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have set up a national human rights commission. Brunei, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Singapore and Vietnam have yet to set up a national human rights commission.

At the 2005 Summit, the Malaysian Government presented its proposal to work towards a regional human rights mechanism in 2006.

Annexes

Annex 1: Vientiane Action Programme (excerpt)

Annex 2: ASEAN Social-Cultural Community (ASCC) Plan of Action

Annex 3: Framework for the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population (2003 – 2006)

Annex 4: Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2004 – 2010)

Annex 5: Work Plan on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (2005 – 2010)

Annex 6: Guidelines for ASEAN Relations with NGOs

Annex 7: Civil Society Presentation to ASEAN Heads of State and Government, 2005

VIENTIANE ACTION PROGRAMME (VAP)

2004-2010¹

I. PREAMBLE

Theme: Towards shared prosperity and destiny in an integrated, peaceful and caring ASEAN Community

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as “ASEAN”), gathered here in Vientiane, Laos, on 29 November 2004 for the Tenth ASEAN Summit;

NOTING that ASEAN Vision 2020 envisions ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian Nations, outward-looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies;

NOTING FURTHER that the Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA), the first in a series of action plans or programmes leading to the end-goal of ASEAN Vision 2020, ends in 2004 and that a successor action plan or programme is needed to guide further progress towards ASEAN Vision 2020;

RECALLING the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, which elaborates on the themes of ASEAN Vision 2020 by setting concrete milestones to reach the goals of a broad and comprehensive ASEAN Community, founded on the three pillars of political and security cooperation, economic integration, and socio-cultural cooperation, to form the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by 2020;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the global and regional economic environment has changed and is continuously challenged by new developments which have an impact on the trade and investment flows, and the economic competitiveness of ASEAN, and that ASEAN now has to work within a new strategic context;

RECOGNISING that deepening and broadening the integration of ASEAN must be accompanied by technical and development cooperation to address the development gap among the Member Countries so that the benefits of ASEAN integration are shared and which will enable all ASEAN Member Countries to move forward in a unified and cohesive manner;

REITERATING our commitment to strengthen efforts to narrow the development gap in ASEAN by building upon existing initiatives such as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the Roadmap for the Integration of ASEAN (RIA), the Ha Noi Declaration on Narrowing Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration of 23 July 2001 and the Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Economic Cooperation and Integration Among Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam of 28 November 2004;

DO HEREBY DECLARE THAT:

1. We agree to pursue the comprehensive integration of ASEAN towards the realisation of an open, dynamic and resilient ASEAN Community by 2020 as envisioned in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II and its annexes in the form of the action plans of the ASEAN Security Community (ASC), the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) and the Recommendations of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration;

2. We shall address, by various ways and means, the development issues and special needs of the less developed ASEAN Member Countries and sub-regional areas of ASEAN, including the implementation of the concept of “Prosper Thy Neighbour” by instituting programmes to narrow the development gap, reducing socio-economic disparities and eradicating poverty within ASEAN, and by doing so, move forward in a unifying and cohesive manner to prosper ASEAN. We also recognize the contributions of sub-regional arrangements such as, the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines’ East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand-Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore-Growth Triangle (IMS-GT), ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) and the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) to reducing the development gap within the region;
3. We shall strengthen further ASEAN’s institutional framework both in terms of its structure and process to ensure that it is responsive to the challenges and needs of moving towards an ASEAN Community, including in terms of coordination and efficiency as well as in strengthening its ability to shape events in Southeast Asia and beyond;
4. We shall adopt greater outward-looking external relation strategies with our Dialogue Partners and friends in building a peaceful, secure and prosperous ASEAN, strengthening our economic linkages and deepening our socio-cultural cooperation with East Asia and beyond;
5. We recognise the need to strengthen ASEAN and shall work towards the development of an ASEAN Charter;
6. We shall, first and foremost, work closely between and among ourselves to generate our own indigenous resources as well as reach out to our Dialogue Partners and all others who wish to engage ASEAN on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and mutual benefit, to build bridges between the public sector and all other sectors of society within and outside ASEAN in order to facilitate a synergy of experience, expertise and resources available thereof for the attainment of the ASEAN Community;
7. We shall promote an ASEAN cultural heritage as a creative expression of the ASEAN spirit, and as a basis for an enduring bond of an ASEAN regional identity, since it originates from common ties throughout history and a shared aspiration for peace and prosperity;
8. We hereby endorse the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP), the successor to the HPA, to be implemented for the period 2004-2010, as an instrument to unify and cross-link the strategies and goals of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community and as an integral part of the action plans and programmes building up to the realisation of the goals of ASEAN Vision 2020;
9. As the process leading to the establishment of the ASEAN Community is continuously evolving, the VAP should therefore be perceived as an evolving document. Therefore, the lists of activities that are envisaged as being implementable in the period of 2004-2010, as contained in the various annexes to the VAP, are non-exhaustive; and
10. We commit ourselves, therefore, to implement the VAP paying attention to its two dimensions, the first being the broader integration of the ten Member Countries into one cohesive ASEAN Community, and the second being the identification of new strategies for narrowing the development gap to quicken the pace of integration, and working closely among ourselves, with our Dialogue Partners and others, to mobilise political will and generate the required resources for the effective implementation of the VAP.

II. GOALS AND STRATEGIES TOWARDS REALISING THE ASEAN COMMUNITY

1. ASEAN Security Community
2. ASEAN Economic Community
3. ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community
4. Goals and Strategies for Narrowing the Development Gap
5. Implementation Mechanisms

(Note: Only 3. 'ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community', and 4. 'Goals and Strategies for Narrowing the Development Gap' are reproduced in full here. For the full VAP text which includes 1. 'ASEAN Security Community', 2. 'ASEAN Economic Community' and 5. 'Implementation Mechanisms', visit - <http://www.aseance.org>)

3. ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

Theme: Nurturing human, cultural and natural resources for sustained development in a harmonious and people-centred ASEAN

Strategic Thrusts

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) represents ASEAN's aspirations to lift the quality of life of its peoples, sustainably use natural resources and strengthen its cultural identity towards a people-centred ASEAN. The roadmap for the Community focuses on four strategic thrusts to support other ASEAN Community goals: strong and functional systems of social protection that address poverty, equity and health impacts of economic growth; promoting environmental sustainability and sustainable natural resource management that meets current and future needs; social governance that manages impacts of economic integration; and the preservation and promotion of the region's cultural heritage and cultural identity.

Since economic growth could be threatened by social inequities that could in turn undermine political stability, the ASEAN socio-cultural action programme is linked inextricably with the economic and security pillars of the ASEAN Community. The establishment of the ASCC stems from the premise that economic integration and security alone will not be sufficient to realise the vision of an ASEAN Community.

The human, natural and cultural resources of ASEAN provide the means for economic growth. The sustainable development and conservation of these resources allows for the region to prosper now and into the future, thereby enabling people to uplift their living standards and have a decent and healthy lifestyle. Measures taken to promote social protection, cultural identity, the conservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment fuel economic growth and sustain life.

3.1 Building a Community of Caring Societies

The hallmark of a strong and resilient community of caring societies is its commitment and capability to address the core issues of poverty, equity and health. National initiatives will fundamentally drive the manner and extent to which these issues are addressed. However, the Member Countries can gain significant leveraging of political commitment and goals at the national level through regional advocacy.

The regional interventions that will complement the national actions include:

- i. Raising the standard of living of marginalised, disadvantaged groups by strengthening the capacity of officials in rural development and poverty alleviation administrations and promoting approaches that engage these groups in society;
- ii. Facilitating universal access to education and promoting high standards through networking and institutional collaborations.
- iii. Reducing the social risks faced by children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities, by supporting programmes consistent with international conventions and promoting services such as aged care, health care and education;
- iv. Increasing the effective participation of family, civil society and the private sector in tackling poverty and social welfare issues through the establishment of networking and exchange programmes, and promoting the professions involved in poverty and social welfare issues;
- v. Increasing the participation of women and youth in the productive workforce through skills training and increasing access to microfinance and information systems;
- vi. Addressing health development concerns;
- vii. Preventing the spread and reducing the harm of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases;
- viii. Enhancing food security, in particular the establishment of food security information systems;
- ix. Ensuring a region of disaster-resilient nations by minimising the adverse effects of disasters in pursuit of safer communities and sustainable development.
- x. Ensuring a Drug Free ASEAN by 2015 through prevention, treatment and community-based control of drug abuse, including the promotion of alternative development, as well as the elimination of drug trafficking; and
- xi. Promoting science and technology in ASEAN to improve regional human resources by developing science and technology culture and increasing usage of applied science and technology in socio-economic activities.

3.2 Managing the Social Impact of Economic Integration

Domestic policy adjustments and emerging regional production arrangements from economic integration will have a profound social impact that will be felt mostly in the labour market. Consequently there is a need to:

- i. Enhance human resource development through the networking of skills training institutions, and the development of regional assessment and training programmes;
- ii. Strengthen the capacity of governments to monitor labour markets and monitor human resource indicators; and

- iii. Promote social protection and social risk management systems.

The inclusion of health services as one of the eleven priority sectors for vertical integration will require strategies to address the impact of liberalisation in the health sector. In addition, the development of mutual recognition arrangements shall facilitate labour mobility in the region and will support the realisation of the AEC.

3.3 Promoting Environmental Sustainability

The ASCC promotes a clean and green ASEAN with fully established mechanisms for sustainable development to ensure the protection of the region's environment, the sustainability of its natural resources and the high quality of life of its people.

The medium-term strategies and milestones in pursuit of this goal are:

Environmental Management

- i. Effectively address global environmental issues without impinging on competitiveness, or social and economic development based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility;
- ii. Prevent transboundary haze pollution as a result of land and/or forest fires through concerted national efforts and intensified regional action and international cooperation, pursued in the context of sustainable development and in accordance with the provisions of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution;
- iii. Establish a clean and green ASEAN, rich in cultural traditions (where the values and practices of the people are in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature), with citizens who are environmentally literate, imbued with the environmental ethic, and willing and capable to ensure the sustainable development of the region through environmental education and public participation efforts;
- iv. Aim for zero waste and minimal impact on the environment, and promote business opportunities in environmental goods and services, through relevant environmentally sound technologies;
- v. Ensure cities/urban areas in ASEAN are environmentally sustainable, while meeting the social and economic needs of the people; and
- vi. Strive for harmonisation of environmental policies, legislation, regulations, standards and databases, taking into account the national circumstances of Member Countries, to support the integration of the environmental, social and economic goals of the region.

Natural Resource Management

- i. Ensure ASEAN's coastal and marine environment are sustainably managed, representative ecosystems, pristine areas and species are protected; economic activities are sustainably managed, and public awareness of the coastal and marine environment instilled;
- ii. Ensure ASEAN's rich biological diversity is conserved, and sustainably managed, and the benefits arising from these biological and genetic resources are fairly and equitably shared toward enhancing social, economic and environmental well-being;
- iii. Promote sustainability of water resources to ensure sufficient water quantity of acceptable quality to meet the

needs of the people of ASEAN in terms of health, food security, the economy and the environment, taking into consideration the strong linkage between water, health and poverty;

- iv. Ensure sustainable management of land-based resources while enhancing optimum agricultural production;
- v. Promote the sustainable management of forest resources and critical ecosystems through the eradication of unsustainable practices as well as strengthening the preservation and management of the ASEAN Heritage Parks; and
- vi. Promote environmentally sound and socially responsible mineral development practices in the sustainable management and optimum utilisation of mineral resources.

3.4 Promoting an ASEAN Identity

Amidst the diversity of their historical experience and cultural heritage, common threads of historical ties, habitation of a geographical area and aspirations for peace and prosperity weave the ASEAN nations together and form the foundations of an ASEAN identity. The strategies to foster ASEAN awareness and build an ASEAN identity are:

- i. Mainstream the promotion of ASEAN awareness and regional identity in national communications plans and educational curricula, people-to-people contact including through arts, tourism and sports, especially among the youth, and the promotion of ASEAN languages learning through scholarships and exchanges of linguists;
- ii. Preserve and promote ASEAN cultural heritage through the promotion of exchanges, meetings of experts and the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage;
- iii. Encourage dialogue amongst Member Countries to promote a deeper understanding of the regions' civilisation, cultures and religions; and
- iv. Further promote ASEAN's standing in the international community through the proactive engagement of ASEAN in international issues and strengthening communication mechanisms.

4. Goals and Strategies for Narrowing The Development Gap

Theme: Progressing together through cooperation in development

We have explicitly and repeatedly declared the need to narrow the development gap if ASEAN Member Countries are to move forward in a unified manner to realise Vision 2020. This need was first recognised and officially announced in the Hanoi Declaration on Narrowing Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration of 2001. It was reaffirmed in the Bali Concord II of 2003.

The development gap is often manifested by disparity in per capita GDP (income). It can also be manifested by disparities in other dimensions of human development, such as life expectancy and the literacy rate. The gap can also be measured by disparity in poverty incidence.

The gap must be narrowed as an end in itself, if the principle that development is a fundamental human right is to be followed. It must also be narrowed, as a necessary condition for realising the end goal of economic integration: one community of ten nations functioning as a single market and production base. Indeed, efforts to

narrow the development gap would be self-reinforcing. They would help remove the biggest constraint to the formation of the AEC, which in turn would help narrow that gap.

4.1 Goal

The practical goal of the VAP for narrowing the development gap is to reduce the large disparities in terms of per capita GDP as well as other human development dimensions. The development gap exists between the ASEAN-6 and the CLMV countries, and within the ASEAN-6 countries, where some isolated pockets of underdevelopment persist.

To realise this goal, ASEAN Member Countries will determine and agree, at an appropriate forum the extent to which the gap could be realistically narrowed through the VAP by 2010 and its successor programmes or plans of action by 2015 and by 2020. By sharing experiences on how they have planned and implemented their development policies, strategies and programmes, Member Countries can draw lessons from one another and apply these to their own development strategies.

4.2 Strategy

To achieve the goal, technical and development cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries and with Dialogue Partners will be intensified as the main strategy to help less developed Member Countries accelerate the process of economic integration, but in a way that leads to equitable and inclusive development. A key element is to ensure that regional cooperation supplements rather than supplants national efforts.

The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), ASEAN's main instrument for narrowing the development gap, will be strengthened to address development needs of the CLMV and other sub-regional areas. This will include broadening and deepening the scope of the IAI CLMV Work Plan as well as developing innovative modalities for resource mobilization. For the other sub-regional areas, it will involve strengthening the framework for sub-regional cooperation within ASEAN's covering policy, coordination mechanisms and work programme.

Addressing both the benefit and cost of economic integration is another important feature of the strategy. To help narrow the development gap, it will seek to ensure that the benefit of economic integration is maximised and equitably distributed across and within Member Countries. It will also seek to ensure that the cost of integration in terms of economic dislocation and disruption arising from market adjustments is minimised and the burden is equitably shared across and within Member Countries. Intensification of regional cooperation to prevent or mitigate the social costs of integration would also contribute directly towards the realisation of the two other pillars of the ASEAN Community.

The programme for narrowing the development gap will include specific regional cooperation activities aimed at assisting less developed Member Countries in removing tariff, non-tariff and physical barriers to the free flow of goods and services in the product and factor market. The programme will also include activities that supplement national efforts directly aimed at poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and inclusive development.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)

Plan of Action²

INTRODUCTION

The Vision of an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

1. Embedded in ASEAN Vision 2020, Declaration of ASEAN Concord I (1976), Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (2003) and the Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA) is ASEAN's goal of a community of cohesive, equitable and harmonious societies, bound together in solidarity for deeper understanding and cooperation. Its key features are:

- Equitable access to opportunities will be universal — rising above the barriers of religion, race, language, gender and social and cultural background;
- Human potentials are nurtured to the fullest, so that all individuals can participate meaningfully in a competitive world in a manner that gives paramount importance to their welfare and dignity;
- Norms of social and distributive justice are upheld by addressing issues of poverty and equity, and special care is given to vulnerable groups — children, youth, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities — who could be the subject of abuse, neglect and discrimination;
- The environment and natural resources are protected and managed to sustain development and as a legacy for future generations;
- Civil society is engaged in providing inputs for policy choices;
- People are healthy in mind and body and living in harmony in safe environments; and
- ASEAN citizens interact in a community conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural heritage and bound by a common regional identity.

The Imperatives of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

2. The ASCC reflects ASEAN's social agenda that is focused on poverty eradication and human development. It is linked inextricably with the economic and security pillars of the ASEAN Community. Social inequities can threaten economic development and in turn undermine political regimes. Economic instability can exacerbate poverty, unemployment, hunger, illness and disease. Social instability can emerge from environmental scarcity or the inequitable distribution among stakeholders of the use of environmental assets. Failure to address these critical and persistent social issues can further cause both economic and political dislocations.
3. The ASCC will evolve amidst profound changes that are taking place in ASEAN's social landscape. These include: (i) the rise of consumerism and lifestyle changes resulting from rapid economic growth; (ii) increased personal mobility resulting from advances in infrastructure and more open regimes; (iii) transformation of the family roles and structures, with implications on the care of children and the elderly; (iv) the potential of information technology to enhance the speed and quality of learning and development of human skills, thus narrowing the digital divide; (v) the rapid pace of urbanisation and its impact on employment and the delivery of basic services; (vi) shifts in the labour market resulting from economic integration; and (vii) unsustainable exploitation of natural resources in the process of meeting developmental needs.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Plan of Action

4. This ASCC Plan of Action (PoA) will have four core elements:

- Building a community of caring societies to address issues of poverty, equity and human development;
- Managing the social impact of economic integration by building a competitive human resource base and adequate systems of social protection;
- Enhancing environmental sustainability and sound environmental governance; and
- Strengthening the foundations of regional social cohesion towards an ASEAN Community in 2020.

Building a Community of Caring Societies

5. Poverty alleviation, equity and human development lie at the very core of a strong and resilient ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Poverty reduction is fundamental to the development of the human potential, allowing people to participate fully in the mainstream of economic life and contribute to society. A community of caring societies in ASEAN can enhance the potential for production, consumption and wealth creation, thus ensuring the benefits from economic integration. ASEAN Member Countries will therefore strive, individually and collectively, to build caring societies concerned with, committed to, and capable of addressing fundamental issues of poverty, equity and human development. Governments, private sector and civil society will work in partnership to address these concerns.
6. Under the ASCC PoA, the goal of building an ASEAN community of caring societies will address the following concerns:
 - Accelerating the goal of poverty reduction within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
 - Facilitating universal access to education for increased employability, good citizenship, and as a means of empowerment and life-long learning;
 - Promoting the welfare of children by safeguarding their rights, ensuring their survival and full development, and protecting them from abuse, neglect and violence;
 - Promoting improved standards and access to education through networking and institutional collaboration, using existing regional bodies;
 - Enabling youth to have a better future by developing their leadership skills, entrepreneurship, and technical and vocational abilities;
 - Promoting equitable participation of women in the development process by eliminating all forms of discrimination against them;
 - Ensuring that the elderly are adequately cared for by promoting community-based support systems to supplement the role of the family as primary caregiver;
 - Augmenting and supporting the efforts of sectoral bodies to prevent and combat human trafficking, particularly in women and children, through comprehensive policies and measures;
 - Strengthening the system of social welfare through the enhancement of national capacities in responding to emerging social issues;
 - Promoting health and nutrition, including through advocacy on health-related issues and healthy lifestyles;
 - Preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases (including SARS and Avian influenza) through, among others, sharing of experiences and best practices and systems of surveillance;
 - Ensuring access to safe, quality and affordable medicines by building ASEAN capacity and competitive-

ness in pharmaceutical as well as traditional medicines and complementary and alternative medicines;

- Enhancing food security and safety as a fundamental requirement of human security;
- Ensuring a drug-free ASEAN by 2015 through community-based drug prevention, treatment and control of drug abuse in parallel with eliminating drug-trafficking and illicit drug supply through law enforcement and alternative development for the sustainability of drug control; and
- Promoting a culture of science and technology and enhancing cooperation in the utilisation of appropriate applied science and technology in socio-economic activities to improve social well-being;
- Establishing efficient and well-functioning regional mechanisms for disaster prevention and relief that are fully compatible with global disaster management systems.

Managing the Social Impact of Economic Integration

7. ASEAN Member Countries, as a community of caring societies, are committed individually and collectively, to address the impact of economic integration to minimise its social costs and ensure its benefits. Domestic policy adjustments and emerging regional production arrangements from economic integration will have profound social impact that will be felt mostly in the labour market.
8. To manage the social impact, the following key goals will be pursued under the ASCC PoA:
 - Promoting human resource development to build a competitive labour force, through, among others, closer cooperation among existing regional centres in the area of education;
 - Promoting an efficient labour market through mutual skills recognition arrangements to enhance regional mobility so that ASEAN's workforce are prepared for and benefit from economic integration; such efforts would enable labour markets to operate efficiently with appropriate matching of jobs and skills;
 - Strengthening systems of social protection at the national level and working towards adoption of appropriate measures at the regional level to provide a minimum uniform coverage for skilled workers in the region;
 - Addressing the impact of liberalisation in the health sector to meet the needs of ASEAN; and
 - Promoting joint certification and accreditation of science and technology at the regional level to improve science and technology competence of ASEAN's human resources.

Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

9. A clean and green ASEAN, with fully developed mechanisms for environmental governance, is both a shared goal and responsibility of ASEAN Member Countries. ASEAN commitments to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) have provided the framework for ASEAN cooperation on the environment which currently focuses on ten priority areas: (i) global environmental issues; (ii) land and forest fires and transboundary haze pollution; (iii) coastal and marine environment; (iv) sustainable forest management; (v) sustainable management of natural parks and protected areas; (vi) freshwater resources; (vii) public awareness and environmental education; (viii) promotion of environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production; (ix) urban environmental management and governance; and (x) sustainable monitoring and reporting, and database harmonisation.

10. Under the ASCC PoA, the following goals for promoting environmental sustainability will be pursued:

- Building national capacities to address issues and commitments to multilateral environmental agreements through awareness raising and informed policy choices;
- Effectively managing transboundary haze in accordance with the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution;
- Promoting the sustainable use of ASEAN's coastal and marine environment as a source of food supply and natural heritage;
- Conserving ASEAN's rich biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from these biological and genetic resources;
- Promoting the sustainable management of forest resources and conserving critical ecosystems through the eradication of unsustainable practices and related activities, as well as strengthening preservation and management of ASEAN Heritage Parks;
- Promoting the sustainability of water resources to ensure adequate and quality water supply to meet ASEAN health and food needs;
- Promoting environmental education with the view to developing ASEAN citizens who are environmentally conscious;
- Promoting environmentally-sound technologies in partnership with the private sector;
- Ensuring quality living standards in ASEAN cities and urban areas;
- Augmenting and supporting the efforts of the ASEAN Economic Community through the energy sector in developing alternative fuels in order to prevent environmental devastation and resource exhaustion; and
- Promoting environmentally sound and socially responsible mineral development practices in the sustainable management and optimum utilisation of mineral resources.

Strengthening the Foundations of Regional Social Cohesion

11. With globalisation, many of the region's traditional societies, with their cherished cultural norms and practices, are facing new challenges. As ASEAN continues in its community-building efforts, the concern is how to fulfil its aspirations for progress and prosperity while at the same time preserving its rich cultural heritage. Thus, the ASEAN Community envisaged to emerge from regional integration by 2020 is where people, amidst the diversity of their historical and cultural experience, are conscious of a common regional identity. This sense of regional identity and solidarity will have been built on years of cumulative interaction in all facets of social and economic life and at all levels – communities, governments and civil society.

12. Under the ASCC PoA, the goal of creating an ASEAN identity involves:

- Mainstreaming the promotion of ASEAN awareness, regional identity and values in national communications plans, educational curricula, people-to-people contact mainly through culture, arts and sports, especially among the youth, and the promotion of ASEAN languages learning through scholarships and exchanges of linguists;
- Preserving and promoting ASEAN cultural heritage and living traditions, as a vehicle to better understand the link between culture and development, and as a source of inspiration for future endeavours;

- Fostering dialogues among civilisations, cultures and religions as a means to foster better understanding, build confidence, and address threats to peace and security; and
- Promoting ASEAN's standing in the international community.

Implementation Modalities

- Specific measures envisaged under each of the four elements of the ASCC PoA are in Appendix A. These measures will be translated into more concrete projects and activities in the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) covering the medium-term period 2004-2010. In general, ASCC activities fall into three categories: (i) nationally-driven initiatives; (ii) regional activities that enhance or complement national initiatives through sharing of experiences, information and knowledge; establishment of regional networks; and joint regional approaches (e.g. the development of regional work programmes); and (iii) regional activities that involved setting up of regional mechanisms or standards.
- For nationally-driven initiatives, ASEAN Member Countries shall prepare individual action plans for the period 2005-2010 consistent with their respective national policies and development priorities, and taking into account implementation capacity, including the availability of budgetary resources. Peer review and monitoring of these individual action plans will be done at the level of the relevant ASEAN body, consolidated by the ASEAN Secretariat, and reflected in the Secretary-General's report card to the ASEAN Summit.
- The AMM shall take necessary follow-up measures to implement this Plan of Action including consultation and coordination with other relevant ASEAN Ministerial bodies; setting up ad-hoc groups as appropriate; reporting annually the progress of implementation to the ASEAN Summit; as well as introducing new measures and activities to strengthen the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community as appropriate.
- Self-reliance, shared responsibility and ownership are the principles that will guide the implementation of ASCC projects. The discipline of mainstreaming regional goals and commitments into the national plans and priorities will be of paramount importance in order to secure the resources required for implementation. Regional advocacy can provide the leverage to help drive national level actions and secure the necessary budget resources.
- For regional level activities, particular attention will be given to activities that are best achieved through regional cooperation because of resulting economies of scale, value-added, or strategic interests. These activities will be implemented primarily through the relevant ASEAN bodies or through the ASEAN Secretariat.
- Implementing the ASCC PoA will require intensive and sustained capacity building at the national and regional levels in a wide range of areas. Active participation of various stakeholders in ASCC activities will also be encouraged to draw from their wealth of expertise and experience and to promote a strong sense of commitment and ownership of projects and activities. Building region-wide networks of NGOs, training centres, academic institutions and other ASEAN organisations will gradually weave into the fabric of the ASEAN Community and help to strengthen social cohesion.
- Mobilisation of resources will remain to be a key challenge for implementing various activities under the ASCC PoA. Resource mobilisation, however, should increasingly be viewed as a process of mobilising national, regional and external resources — intellectual, technical and financial — in support of ASEAN priorities.
- Finally, the ASEAN Foundation, with the full support of the Member Countries, should play a more active

role in supporting the implementation of the ASCC PoA. Activities where the ASEAN Foundation could play an active role include: promoting access to ICT resources of differently advantaged groups (youth, women, persons with disabilities, and rural communities); promoting ASEAN awareness through language training and mass media; and youth exchange activities (such as through volunteer programmes and youth camps) with the view to facilitating greater awareness among ASEAN youth of the region's vision of a cohesive community of caring societies.

21. To realise the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by 2020, ASEAN shall endeavour to work towards the implementation of the areas of activities in the following Appendix. It is acknowledged that some of these activities are already ongoing and at various stages of implementation. Additional activities could also be implemented in the future. ASEAN will make every effort to promptly carry out activities, which gain consensus support.

APPENDIX A

for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)

Plan of Action

Specific Measures

I. Building a Community of Caring Societies

- a) Implement an “MDG Plus” initiative to accelerate poverty reduction in ASEAN;
- b) Facilitate universal access to education for vulnerable groups (youth, women, persons with disabilities) to obtain the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and meaningful participation in society;
- c) Strengthen educational networks and institutional collaboration to improve standards of, and access to, education;
- d) Ensure a better future for children by safeguarding their rights, ensuring their survival and development, and protecting them from abuse, neglect and violence;
- e) Create enabling environments to prepare the youth for their future role as ASEAN citizens equipped with the necessary skills in leadership, entrepreneurship, and technical and vocational abilities;
- f) Promote the equitable and effective participation of women in all fields both as agents and beneficiaries of development;
- g) Promote community-based support systems for the elderly to supplement the role of families as primary caregiver and to build the capacity of health care professionals to address the needs of the elderly;
- h) Ensure access of persons with disabilities to opportunities and protection against all forms of discrimination;
- i) Strengthen social welfare mechanisms to make them more responsive to emerging social issues resulting from globalisation as well as demographic shifts;
- j) Strengthen regional mechanisms and networks for combating human trafficking;
- k) Ensure a healthy ASEAN Community living in harmony and safe environments;
- l) Promote an enabling environment for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and for the comprehensive treatment, care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS in ASEAN;
- m) Enhance the effectiveness of regional surveillance, preparedness, early warning, and response to emerging and resurging infectious diseases;
- n) Ensure access to safe, quality and affordable medicines by building ASEAN capacity and competitiveness in pharmaceuticals as well as traditional medicines/complementary and alternative medicines;
- o) Promote an enabling environment that allows ASEAN citizens to make healthy lifestyle choices accessible, affordable and sustainable and consistent with their views, beliefs, and culture in supportive environments;
- p) Strengthen food security by enhancing stability in food production and supply and protect the region against fluctuations in production of basic commodities;
- q) Strengthen food safety systems to ensure the protection of consumers’ health by increasing the level of credibility and competency of regulatory authorities, and enhancing industry and consumer awareness and participation in food safety;

- r) Promote activities related to community-based drug prevention aimed at families, schools and youth through publications, campaigns and training;
- s) Strengthen cooperation with the private sector, in creating a science and technology community in the region;
- t) Promote applied science and technology in socio-economic activities to improve social well-being; and
- u) Establish efficient and well-functioning regional mechanisms for disaster prevention and management, including a coordinated response action plan in ASEAN and a network of training institutes.

II. Managing the Social Impact of Economic Integration

- a) Support the efforts of the ASEAN Economic Community to facilitate the movement of professional and skilled persons, including mutual skills recognition arrangements for qualification in professional services to realise regional economic integration in ASEAN;
- b) Develop a well-prepared labour force in ASEAN that would benefit from and cope with the challenges of regional economic integration;
- c) Establish a technologically competitive ASEAN, competent in strategic and enabling technologies, with an adequate pool of technically trained manpower, strong networks of scientific and technical institutions and centres of excellence;
- d) Strengthen systems of social protection at the national level and work towards adoption of appropriate measures at the regional level to provide a minimum uniform coverage for skilled workers in the region;
- e) Promote sound industrial relations, industrial harmony, high productivity and social practice through tripartite cooperation;
- f) Secure the benefits of trade liberalisation in healthcare services in terms of increased availability and better accessibility to quality and affordable health-related products and services;
- g) Enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN health and related industries;
- h) Strengthen regional training on management of innovation and technology, and establish a mechanism for its regional certification and accreditation; and
- i) Consider the establishment of centres for training and research to support the development of human resources and institutional capacity in regional as well as international cooperation.

III. Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

- a) Effectively address global environmental concerns by building national capacities to address issues and commitments to multilateral environmental agreements through awareness-raising and informed policy choices;
- b) Effectively manage transboundary haze pollution resulting from land and/or forest fires through concerted national efforts and intensified regional action and international cooperation in accordance with the provisions of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (the Haze Agreement), including the operationalisation of the ASEAN Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control and the ASEAN Haze Fund;
- c) Promote the sustainable use of ASEAN's coastal and marine environment through the implementation of the ASEAN criteria for marine waters, and marine heritage and protected areas;

- d) Ensure the conservation of ASEAN's rich biological diversity through the implementation of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Access to, and Equitable Sharing of Genetic and Biological Resources (expected to be concluded in 2004);
- e) Promote the sustainable management of forest resources, which include protection of forests in an ecologically sound and integrated manner by developing and adopting common criteria for sustainable forest management in ASEAN, and eradicating unsustainable practices and related activities;
- f) Promote the preservation of ASEAN Heritage Parks through coordinated systems of management;
- g) Promote sustainability of water resources to ensure sufficient water quantity of acceptable quality to meet the needs of ASEAN in terms of health, food security and environmental sustainability through among others, the promotion of integrated river basin management and awareness promotion;
- h) Promote environmental education through formal and non-formal education systems, capacity building and networking;
- i) Promote environmentally-sound technologies in active partnership with the business sector through innovative financial mechanisms and labelling schemes;
- j) Promote quality living standards in ASEAN cities/urban areas by achieving standards for environmental pollution reduction, including ensuring good ambient air and water quality, and minimum solid waste disposal;
- k) Establish parameters for harmonising environmental policies, legislation, regulations, standards and databases, and preparing regular state of the environment reports; and
- l) Pursue joint research in developing alternative fuels in order to prevent environmental devastation and resource exhaustion.

IV. Strengthening the Foundations of Regional Social Cohesion

- a) Promote ASEAN awareness with the ultimate goal of fostering an ASEAN regional identity by promoting interactions and exchanges among artists, writers, media practitioners, scholars, students, cultural entrepreneurs, professionals, experts in culture and sports and others;
- b) Promote people-to-people contact, especially among the youth through youth volunteer programmes and youth camps;
- c) Promote ASEAN languages learning through scholarships and exchange of linguists;
- d) Coordinate efforts for the documentation, preservation and safeguarding of national and regional treasures and other properties, antiquities, and works of historic, archaeological, anthropological and scientific significance;
- e) Enhance ASEAN cooperation in culture and information to formulate and implement effective and efficient programmes in a concerted manner in order to promote the rich and vast cultures of ASEAN;
- f) Promote confidence-building at the national and regional levels by promoting the learning of core values, customs and traditions and integrating multiple perspectives on civilisations through regular dialogue mechanisms; and
- g) Promote an image of unity, stability and dynamism of ASEAN by strengthening contacts with mass media, the international fora and other channels of communication.

Framework for the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population (2003 – 2006)³

I. INTRODUCTION

Overall Objective:

The work programme aims to assist the ASEAN Ministers of Social Welfare and Development to realize the ASEAN Leaders' vision of a socially cohesive and caring ASEAN by 2020 where hunger, malnutrition, deprivation and poverty are no longer basic problems; where families as the basic units of society tend to their members, particularly the children, youth, women and elderly, and are capable of meeting new challenges arising from rapid social and economic changes; where the civil society, including the community is empowered and gives special attention to the disadvantaged, disabled and marginalized.

Specific objectives:

- a) To strengthen and intensify regional cooperation in enhancing the role of families, communities, civil society (including non-governmental organizations), the private sector and the government in managing social problems, meet human needs and maximise opportunities for development;
- b) To enhance capacity for anticipating and managing the social consequences of rapid demographic, political, social and economic changes, especially in the context of trade liberalisation and globalisation;
- c) To promote the use of developmental as well as participatory approaches in helping the marginalised and disadvantaged to become independent and to facilitate their integration into society; and
- d) To enhance the capacity of social welfare/social development ministries to mainstream social concerns into the national development agenda.

II. CHALLENGES

- a) Changing structure of the family and its capacity to care due to increased labour participation rate for women; changing roles of men and women in the family; later marriages; increased number of female-headed households; increased rates of divorce or separation; migration; decline in household size and declining support from extended families;
- b) The impact of demographic change, economic development, trade liberalization and developments in information and communication technology (ICT) on family and social welfare and the need for social welfare policies that are proactive and multisectoral;
- c) The lack of reliable information on the nature and extent of social problems in the region;
- d) The shortage of professionally trained social workers in strengthening social care and support; and
- e) The special needs of the CLMV region, particularly as this relates to the rehabilitation and integration of victims of war.

III. STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAMMING REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. The following are strategies for programming regional cooperation on social welfare, family and population:
 - a) To promote capacity-building and human resource development in addressing social welfare and development issues.
 - b) To enhance the integration of social issues into national development planning at all levels and to strengthen coordination with other ASEAN bodies;
 - c) To promote policies, strategies and mechanisms such as cost-sharing that will foster self-reliance and sustainability in mobilising resources for implementing social welfare/development initiatives;
 - d) To strengthen cooperation with ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, regional and international agencies and civil society groups; and
 - e) To formulate ASEAN common positions to prepare for international meetings.

2. A "regional" project means that the project has clear "value-added" or comparative advantage over national activities. The following are some criteria to consider in formulating projects for the regional work programme:
 - a) Regional activities are those which address problems that are transboundary in nature or require inter-country cooperation. For example, regional trade integration and efforts to combat transboundary haze and trafficking in persons, are "regional" in the sense that these problems occur across borders and can only be addressed effectively through inter-country cooperation.
 - b) Regional activities are those which facilitate the implementation of, or commitment to, international conventions and other regional and international instruments on social welfare and development. An activity is regional if it provides an opportunity for Member Countries which are signatories to international conventions to share experiences on difficulties and solutions encountered in their implementation. Regional fora of this kind also provide opportunities for strengthening commitment to internationally accepted objectives.
 - c) Activities which promote the formulation of an ASEAN consensus at international and regional fora can also be considered regional. The Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) Terms of Reference already includes the formulation of common positions, as appropriate, in preparation for international conferences on issues related to social welfare and development. The presentation of the Declaration on Commitments for Children in ASEAN to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002 by the Chair of the 4th AMRSW is a good example.
 - d) Regional activities are those which promote learning from regional best practices. The diversity in levels of development among ASEAN Member Countries, far from being a liability, could be an asset for regional cooperation. This situation enables the less-developed countries to learn from their more advanced counterparts. Knowing about what other countries are doing can also potentially promote synergistic linkages between institutions, promote economies of scale and prevent duplication of efforts. Activities which facilitate regional learning include networking of centres of excellence (through the internet or regular focused meetings); compilation of best practice models, guidelines, standards, etc; compilation of directories of researchers, experts, resources and the like.
 - e) Regional activities are those which promote linkages among centres of excellence through the establish-

ment of networks. ASEAN networks ranging from higher education to occupational safety and health have been established to promote, in particular, the sharing of information, best practice knowledge and training resources. The SOMSWD TOR included a statement on promoting the networking of “social development institutions, professionals, practitioners and centers of excellence in teaching and research in the region”.

- f) Regional activities are those which build a capacity for compiling regional indicators and trends.
 - g) Regional activities are those which take advantage of economies of scale. A good example is training of trainers course carried out in one ASEAN country, for participants from all Member Countries, instead of having ten different trainings in ten different locations.
3. These criteria for ensuring regionality could be used for future meetings of the SOMSWD to select projects for the regional work programme which have comparative advantage over national projects.

IV. PRIORITY PROGRAMME AREAS

4. In identifying the priority areas for regional cooperation, two kinds of strategies could be considered. These are: non-programme (for activities that do not require proposals) and programme strategies for those that require the preparation of a proposal for funding from a donor agency or Dialogue Partner.

A. Non-Programme Strategy

- a) *Formulating common positions in preparation for international meetings and/or activities on social welfare and development.*
5. In order to facilitate the formulation of common positions in advance of international meetings and/or activities, the chairperson and host of a SOMSWD Meeting could consult Member Countries to propose agenda items for the SOMSWD to consider formulating ASEAN common positions in preparation for upcoming international meetings or activities on social welfare and development.
- b) *Facilitating discussion of policy issues as well as the exchange of experiences*
6. SOMSWD may also wish to give priority to discussion of strategic policy issues such as globalization, as directed by the 4th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare (AMRSW4) held in August 2001, as well as share experience on innovative approaches to social development and the provision of social welfare services. The SOMSWD Meeting agenda could include a regular item on exchange of views on policy and technical issues and the host could propose a theme or themes for discussion.
- c) *Sharing information on current national training activities which are open to other ASEAN Countries for participation*
7. If a Member Country is planning to conduct training programmes in English under SOMSWD priority areas, it may wish to inform SOMSWD Focal Points and invite them to send participants to the training, at their own expense. With this approach, priority issues of the SOMSWD could be implemented without the need to prepare project proposals or reliance on external funding. To facilitate this exchange of information, Member Countries who wish to invite other countries to their activities could first inform the ASEAN Secretariat which could then circulate the invitations to other countries for consideration. A regular agenda item on such trainings could also be included on the SOMSWD agenda.

B. Programme Strategy

8. This section will concern the three priority areas of the SOMSWD for which proposals could be prepared and submitted for funding consideration by Dialogue Partners and other funding agencies. The priority areas are social welfare, family and population (children is the fourth area of priority but will be addressed through a separate work programme, to be prepared in cooperation with UNICEF). In this work programme, social welfare and development and the family will be taken as one priority cluster while population forms the other cluster.

B 1. Social Welfare and Development and the Family

9. Cooperation on social welfare matters has generally not been translated into specific projects/programmes of cooperation at ASEAN level, even though broad priorities have been identified by previous meetings of the AMRSW. Nevertheless, the Meeting of ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare in Kuala Lumpur held in March 1990 considered a number of proposals, including strategies for the development of social welfare in ASEAN, improving rural life, information exchanges, and the holding of meetings among social welfare experts including NGOs. The ASEAN Plan of Action on Social Development adopted by the Committee on Social Development (COSD) in 1995 unfortunately did not provide guidance on this matter and just states that existing programmes and social welfare should be strengthened and new ones developed.
10. It will be recalled that a proposal to establish a sub-committee on social welfare was turned down by the 2nd Meeting of the AMRSW held in 1990 in Kuala Lumpur. With the absence of a sub-committee dedicated to social welfare issues, the status quo then prevailed, with several pending projects languishing for years under the former Committee on Social Development (COSD) until they were eventually dropped from the agenda of the COSD Meetings, except for two projects concerning families: “Strengthening Families” and “Community-Based Family Well-Being”. With the SOMSWD now replacing the COSD to focus on social welfare, family, population and children, there is an opportunity to revitalize cooperation on social welfare and the family.
11. SOMSWD could begin with a set of programmes that are cross cutting for the entire sector of social welfare development, focusing on establishing the infrastructure for care and exchange of information on social development issues. To achieve these objectives, there is a need to strengthen capacity to anticipate the impact of external developments, as well as set up the infrastructure for the family and community to provide care. An effort will be made to include activities for which a regional approach may have “added value” or comparative advantage over national initiatives. Any further operationalisation would have to take into account on-going and planned initiatives in Member Countries and international agencies.
12. With these objectives in mind, cooperation programmes could be classified into these basic categories: policy research; regional networking; training (including exchange of trainees and experts); and advocacy/public information.

(i) Policy research

13. Policy research will include activities intended to promote the capacity of the region’s ministries and departments responsible for social welfare/family and population to anticipate the social impact of development. In particular, SOMSWD may wish to consider developing a capacity for undertaking social impact assessments, particularly as this relates to the impact of trade liberalization and development.

Recommended Activities:

- a) Strengthen capacity for carrying out Social Impact Assessments (including impact of development on family functioning);
- b) Policy research on the changing structure of the family and its role in providing care;
- c) Documenting effective policies/best practice cases from the region for strengthening support for family care provision, including public policy for strengthening “traditional family values”;
- d) Policy based research on the welfare impact of trade liberalization and global economic integration on social development, and identify effective policy measures for improving social protection/security and well-being (in collaboration with the Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication);
- e) Developing a common approach for documenting “social problems”; and
- f) Sharing and documenting lessons learned in solving social problems.

(ii) Regional networking

14. Apart from government ministries and departments, many other institutions and groups work in the area of social development. They include universities, research centers, schools of social work, community organizations, professional associations and the like. Given the generally easy access to the internet in the region, networking among such groups can be accomplished without too much cost. The use of interactive websites and video conferencing could also be explored as ways to intensify networking to exchange information and share experience. As a start, virtual networks could be established for professional social workers associations, family studies research centres and schools of social work, for example.

Recommended Activities:

- a) ASEAN Network for Family Development [could involve government agencies, university research centers, NGO and community groups];
- b) Explore the establishment of a regional network for Schools of Social Work; and
- c) Promote regional networking of professional social workers, NGOs and private sector groups involved in social services education or provision of care.

(iii) Training/Capacity Building

15. Training has been the mainstay of ASEAN cooperation in the social sectors. For this to be even more effective, it may be useful to identify centers of excellence in training from among member countries and to consider utilizing them as regional resource centres for particular specialties. While some countries have identified resource centers in their countries, much more work needs to be done in implementing training programmes based on the principle of comparative advantage. Another strategy for capacity-building could be to facilitate exchanges of trainees and trainers across the region through focused attachment programmes.
16. Training is also a major priority for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) which has the objective of facilitating the integration of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV) into ASEAN. A major component of the initiative is HRD, with training programmes offered by the more developed ASEAN countries to meet the needs of CLMV countries. ASEAN Leaders, at their 4th Informal Summit held in 2000 adopted as part of the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement the goal of reducing the digital divide in the region. SOMSWD could also consider developing activities for promoting access to ICT for the disadvantaged, in particular persons with disabilities.

Recommended Activities:

- a) Strengthening the role of community and non-governmental organizations in providing community-based social services for selected target groups (persons with disabilities, older persons, juvenile offenders, ex-prisoners, ex-drug dependents, for example) [explore participation in the project of the Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD) on strengthening community based care for the older persons and the ASEAN-ROK project on home-based care for the older persons];
- b) Sharing of resources for specialized training for professional social workers based on identification of priority areas and centers of excellence in the region;
- c) ASEAN Social Workers Exchange Programme (development of an attachment programme for trainers and policy makers at social welfare agencies on selected priority areas);
- d) Promote development of prevention strategies and community-based social care and support services for persons with HIV/AIDS (in line with ASEAN Work Programme on HIV/AIDS, II, 2002-2005, and in collaboration with the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS);
- e) Coordinate with the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability Project to facilitate access of ASEAN Member Countries to regional level training programmes;
- f) Development of a programme to increase capacity for producing prostheses and other assistive devices for persons with disabilities, including facilitating access to available research, innovative production methods and explore joint procurement for assistive devices and raw materials for their manufacture; and
- g) Development of a work plan to facilitate access of persons with disabilities to ICT (explore collaboration with UNESCAP).

(iv) Advocacy/public information

17. To be effective, social policy has to be strategic and proactive, that is, it needs to understand not only the developmental trends impacting on policy but should also be able to recommend pre-emptive measures and perhaps more importantly, effective working linkages with other developmental sectors. Advocacy includes efforts to keep social issues on the national development agenda. At another level, advocacy can also address stigma and discrimination against disadvantaged persons (for example persons living with disability) through public education and other means like the formulation of protective legislation.

Recommended Activities:

- a) Promote sharing of experience to facilitate the mainstreaming of social welfare concerns into the national development agenda; and
- b) Sharing best practices and strategies for reducing discrimination of persons with disabilities, people with HIV/AIDS and also persons undergoing rehabilitation.

B 2. Population

18. The ASEAN Population Programme (APP) was begun in 1976 with assistance from the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and Australia. Four phases of the APP have been implemented (Phase I, 1976-1979; II, 1980-1983; III, 1984-1988; IV, 1989-1993). Under phase III the following projects were implemented: integration of population and development; population mobility and urbanization; training on population and development; socio-economic consequences of ageing; and the ASEAN population information network.

19. Phase IV covered urbanization, population and development planning; family planning management; health and social programmes for the older persons; and infant mortality reduction. The APP was terminated with the completion of Phase IV in 1993 when the funding needed did not materialise.
20. Since priority areas under the ASEAN Work Programme on Social Welfare, Family and Population and the vulnerable groups targeted such as the older persons were identified based on current and anticipated demographic trends, the population dimension has therefore been integrated into these issues. In view of the many bilateral and multilateral initiatives (such as those under the UN) on population and development in the ASEAN region, the component on population should be deferred until such time when there is a need to address issues such as population mobility and HIV vulnerability or labour migration, for example. In that case, a Member Country could volunteer to coordinate development of the collaboration plan on population, with assistance from the ASEAN Secretariat to obtain funding for the services of a consultant. The coordinator, assisted by an expert could do the following, among other tasks, to prepare a plan:
 - a) survey needs in the region and to identify the niche for ASEAN cooperation on population;
 - b) review externally funded on-going population related projects and activities in the ASEAN region;
 - c) seek opportunities for collaboration within and outside the region;
 - d) develop the draft regional programme comprising tentative project concepts; and
 - e) convene a regional workshop of officials from the national agencies responsible for population matters to review and consider the plan for adoption.

V. GUIDELINES FOR OPERATIONALISING THE WORK PROGRAMME

1. Identifying Country Coordinators for Proposed Projects (Lead Shepherd Approach)

21. Since many of the project ideas under this work programme have yet to be developed into proposals, focal points at each SOMSWD meeting may wish to indicate interest in coordinating projects in which they have expertise or experience so that they could proceed to prepare the needed project proposals.
22. Member Countries interested in coordinating the development of projects for cost sharing or submission to Dialogue Partners for funding will prepare their respective project proposals, submit them to the ASEAN Secretariat for circulation to all SOMSWD Focal Points prior to a SOMSWD meeting.
23. If a project is to be cost-shared the guidelines for cost-sharing as stated in the next section would apply.

2. Utilising Cost Sharing Arrangements

24. Given the overall decline in external funding for ASEAN functional cooperation, cost-sharing may need to be the predominant modality for implementing the proposed activities under this framework work programme. Cost-sharing in ASEAN means that a host country organizing an activity will undertake to defray the organizing costs while participating countries pay their travel and per diem costs of their representatives.
25. The following guidelines apply to a host country organizing an activity, seminar and workshop (particularly those implemented on a cost-sharing basis):
 - a) A Member Country considers hosting cost-shared project for SOMSWD priority area for which it has expertise or experience or on-going/planned activities which could be open to all Member Countries;

- b) The hosting Member Country announces intention to host activity and indicates tentative dates;
- c) Circulates TOR and/or programme for the activity to SOMSWD Focal Points after the project has been accepted by the SOMSWD as a SOMSWD cost-shared project;
- d) Member Countries then provide comments on the activity TOR/programme;
- e) If requested by Hosting Country, the ASEAN Secretariat consults relevant international agencies for resource persons or experts to draft state of the art papers surveying international and regional best practice;
- f) The host country prepares TOR for international expert/resource person, in consultation with ASEAN Secretariat;
- g) Interested participating countries seek their own funding for attending activity;
- h) The host country prepares a media plan involving print, TV and radio to publicize the activity;
- i) The host country could consider providing airport transfers; local hospitality; lunches and tea-breaks; welcome and farewell dinners;
- j) The host country distributes feedback form to all delegates and prepares a summary evaluation based on the feedback received; and
- k) The host country prepares and distributes press release.

3. Collaboration with International Agencies and ASEAN Dialogue Partners

26. Efforts to promote linkages with international agencies need to be strengthened as part of a larger strategy for mobilizing resources and in promoting complementarity of activities. In this regard, there are two possible strategies which could facilitate such linkages. Firstly, as directed by the AMRSW4, the ASEAN Secretariat would explore closer collaboration with international agencies such as UNFPA, UNICEF and ESCAP, and, where appropriate, ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, with a view to possibly concluding memoranda of understanding
27. Secondly, SOMSWD should encourage relevant UN agencies and international social welfare NGOs to attend its meetings where appropriate to provide information on on-going or planned activities in the work programme priority areas.
28. Thirdly, the ASEAN Secretariat should attend the relevant meetings of these UN agencies as a strategy for preventing duplication and also to facilitate joint implementation of projects in areas of mutual priority.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

29. Monitoring and evaluation will be given high priority. Each Member Country implementing a project, whether cost-shared or externally funded, should also prepare a project completion report prepared on the basis of a standardized feedback form to be filled in by all participants. At each SOMSWD, the ASEAN Secretariat will prepare an annual report highlighting overall progress made: achievements, problems encountered and recommendations for future implementation.
30. Since the work programme is for a four-year period from 2003 to 2006, a mid-term review will be conducted before the end of 2004. The mid-term review results could be submitted to the First AMMSWD Meeting scheduled in November 2004 in Chiangmai, Thailand.



Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2004-2010)⁴

Part I: Introduction and Strategic Directions

1. The Third Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE) held on 16 December 2002 called for a review of ASEAN cooperation on rural development and poverty eradication, including a reassessment of the mandate of the ASEAN Task Force on Social Safety Nets (established in December 1998). The review would also identify new priorities for ASEAN cooperation in rural development and poverty eradication to respond to challenges of globalisation, trade liberalisation and regional integration. An ASEAN Session on Revitalising Cooperation on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication convened on 20 June 2003 recommended the following new priorities⁵:

- Globalisation
- Narrowing the Digital Divide, promoting the use of ICT as a tool
- Social Protection
- Employment and Income-generation
- Partnerships, Decentralisation, Local Participation
- Narrowing the Development Gap
- Others
 - Voluntary movement for rural development
 - Possible exchange programme of young professionals dealing in rural development and poverty eradication
 - Public information

2. The ASEAN Secretariat was tasked to develop a framework action plan. Member countries which indicated interest to coordinate some of the priority areas would provide the ASEAN Secretariat with workplans. The 4th SOMRDPE held in December 2003 reviewed a preliminary draft Framework.

Strategic Directions to Respond to Emerging Trends

3. The Framework Action Plan is based on the AMRDPE vision (established in 1997) to eradicate poverty placing emphasis on “promoting the development of progressive, prosperous and self-reliant rural communities” towards “creating a caring society” in the ASEAN Member Countries.

4. The Framework Action Plan’s priorities would address the AMRDPE’s call for:

- innovative and holistic strategies to facilitate access of the rural and urban poor to public utilities and facilities;

- providing a conducive environment for income-generation and employment opportunities for the poor as well as assistance to link small rural economies to markets; and
 - building capacity and occupational skills of the rural people and urban poor – especially in the area of information and communication technology
5. To realize Leaders' Vision of an ASEAN Community by 2020, the 9th ASEAN Summit (October 2003) identified three mutually reinforcing pillars namely political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural cooperation. The ASEAN socio-cultural community would be “a community of caring societies” where the “development and enhancement of human resources is a key strategy for employment generation, alleviating poverty and socio-economic disparities, and ensuring economic growth with equity”.
6. Additionally, the following on-going priorities identified since AMRDPE's establishment in 1997 will continue to be addressed by the Framework Plan:
- a) Facilitating regional networking among governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector, business sector and research institutes;
 - b) Sharing of information, best practices, lessons learnt, research capacity and technical expertise;
 - c) Developing a regional rural volunteer programme; and
 - d) Promoting greater public awareness on the need to accelerate rural development and poverty eradication.

Part II: Priority Areas

A. Globalisation (Coordinator: ASEAN Secretariat)

7. Since its establishment, AMRDPE has sought to address the impact of globalisation and information technology in rural areas. Successive AMRDPEs have called for activities focusing on the longer-term impact of globalisation on the poor and marginalised.
8. ASEAN will carry out several activities to address poverty monitoring and the impact of trade liberalisation on social well-being. These include a study on the social cost of realising an ASEAN economic community; policy reviews to develop fast-track approach to fight poverty (including social protection policies and social investments); preparation of a Southeast Asia Human Development Report; enhancing poverty monitoring systems; and capacity development on risk and vulnerability indicators.
9. Initiatives that would complement these activities are:
- a) Study the links between rural development and poverty eradication with trade liberalisation, globalisation and economic integration:
 - i. Convene a workshop to share strategies on the implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in ASEAN;
 - ii. Document effective policies and best practice cases from the region and elsewhere on the impact of trade liberalisation and (global) economic integration on rural development and poverty eradication; and
 - iii. Prepare and compile regional statistics on poverty, in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat Statistics Unit, to enhance research, assessment and monitoring of poverty.

b) Build capacity of ASEAN officials to:

- i. Develop integrated economic and social policies that would assist rural development and poverty eradication;
- ii. Carry out research, assessment and monitoring of poverty, so as to improve poverty measurement methodologies in ASEAN countries;
- iii. Establish and strengthen national social information and monitoring mechanisms; and
- iv. Establish a regional poverty portal (database and information).

B. Narrowing the Digital Divide, Promoting the use of ICT as a tool (Coordinator: Malaysia)

10. AMRDPE has committed to promote meaningful participation of the poor and the marginalised in the new global economy, especially through improving access to social services and to information and communication technology. This would support the commitment of the ASEAN Leaders to reduce the digital divide in the region.

11. Regional activities would focus on enhancing IT awareness and utilisation among the rural populace in ASEAN countries, to facilitate the transition from traditional agro-based communities into those adequately prepared for regional economic integration. A good example is the project on “Sharing Best Practices on Empowering Rural Communities to Utilise ICT as a Tool to Enhance Income” implemented by Malaysia from 31 May to 2 June 2004. National strategies to bridge the digital divide could include the computerisation of rural schools, provision of internet access, ICT-training for the rural communities and urban poor, and other innovative ways to promote the use of ICT as a tool for rural development and poverty eradication.

12. Other recommended activities at the regional and national levels are:

- a) Increase the use of ICT as a tool by rural development practitioners and coordinators for operational efficiency:
 - i. Improve networking with regional and international agencies that carry out relevant capacity-building activities on ICT access to enable participation of ASEAN Member Countries in their ongoing and planned activities; and
 - ii. Develop work plans (at national level) to facilitate access of ICT to the rural population.
- b) Provide the basic ICT infrastructure in rural areas:
 - i. Network the rural areas through computerisation of rural schools and provision of internet access to rural areas.
- c) Enhance IT awareness and utilisation among the poor and marginalised to improve access to social services:
 - i. Assist ongoing national-level policies and programmes that promote ICT awareness and skills among the local and rural communities; and
 - ii. Provide ICT-training for the rural communities and urban poor.

C. Social Protection (Coordinator: Philippines)

13. The 4th SOMRDPE in December 2003 agreed that SOMRDPE’s work in this area should give priority to social protection for agricultural workers and the informal sector 7.

14. The ASEAN Task Force on Social Safety Nets (ATFSSN) was dissolved in December 2003, as it had completed its core functions. Building on the work that had been done on Social Safety Nets, e.g. the joint ASEAN-AusAID Social Safety Nets Project (May 2001-March 2002) SOMRDPE would henceforth address priorities for social protection, particularly:

- capacity-building of civil society organisations in social services delivery;
- increasing of the involvement of non-governmental and civil society organisations; and
- facilitating adjustment to economic restructuring (proactive social protection).

15. Some other recommended activities are:

- a) Assess the social protection needs of individual member countries based on vulnerabilities beyond those linked to industrial restructuring:
 - i. Study the impact of rapid urbanisation and internal migration, cultural disintegration, overseas work and migration of both men and women, and others.
- b) Strengthen and establish effective capacity of civil society organisations and private sectors groups not only for social services delivery, but more prominently for facilitating and intensifying local community and/or local government roles in social safety and protection:
 - i. Build capacity through inter-country training cum exchange projects;
 - ii. Document and evaluate lessons from community-driven development programmes and social funds; and
 - iii. Establish a digitally-linked network of private groups and civil society organisations that implement social protection programmes by themselves, and with government.
- c) Enhance analysis and interpretation of data and statistics on poverty:
 - i. Coordinate with national, regional and UN statistical data agencies in order to share strategies, lessons and tools; and
 - ii. Establish a comparative pool of regional data bases that can provide cross-country analysis.
- d) Prioritise the agricultural and informal sectors:
 - i. Identify effective policy measures for improving social safety/protection (in collaboration with the ASEAN Senior Officials on Social Welfare and Development);
 - ii. Build on ongoing efforts/initiatives for social protection as a proactive approach which advocates promoting employability through training; and
 - iii. Develop activities to address the impact of trade liberalisation on the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in collaboration with the Senior Officials Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF).

D. Employment and Income-generation (Coordinator: Thailand)

16. AMRDPE has emphasised the importance of human resources development through greater investments in education, skills training and lifelong learning to promote employability and financial security of the marginalised groups. Sustainable rural development and poverty eradication must be based on the principle of self reliance through job development, community empowerment, capacity building for local government and resource mobilisation at local level. To accomplish this, conducive environments are necessary to facilitate income-generation activities, provide employment opportunities, and improve market access of small rural economies. The role of the private sector, as well as synergistic linkages with relevant ASEAN committees

addressing health, agriculture, labour, women, and social welfare, are also important.

17. Future collaborative activities would address the following priorities of the Framework Plan:

- Microfinance
- Economic entrepreneurship
- Development of rural enterprises
- Productive economic activities
- Market networking
- Job training

18. Thailand has developed a proposal for an ASEAN Regional Workshop on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, sharing its experience on the “One Tambon One Product” initiative as an innovative strategy to create productive economic activities for the rural poor. Thailand has also offered to open up to interested ASEAN countries its ongoing bilateral programmes with Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, on capacity-building for community saving groups. Suggested activities are:

- a) Promote economic entrepreneurship and the development of rural enterprises:
 - i. Collaborate with the private sector to promote large-scale production and marketing by small rural businesses to link small rural economies to the larger market;
 - ii. Convene a regional workshop to share experience on community enterprises (eg. Thailand’s “one tambon one product” approach);
 - iii. Facilitate access of rural population to micro-financing;
 - iv. Invest in education, skills training and lifelong learning to promote employability of the poor;
 - v. Conduct a joint exercise with the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) to share experiences on informal sector development; and
 - vi. Conduct a joint exercise with the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) to share experiences on rural youth entrepreneurship.
- b) Build the capacity of officials in rural development and poverty alleviation administration:
 - i. Conduct workshops on financial management for low-income housing development;
 - ii. Conduct study visits on integrated farming; and
 - iii. Include an exchange of views on micro-financing and employment/income generation strategies as a regular item on the SOMRDPE agenda.

E. Partnerships, Decentralisation, Local Participation (Coordinator: ASEAN Secretariat)

19. The importance of shared responsibilities and partnerships for poverty reduction is increasingly being recognised. Partnerships are not only among government agencies and NGOs dealing in rural poverty reduction, but also local community participation.

20. The ASEAN Secretariat and the World Bank are currently implementing a project promoting local participation approaches as a strategy for rural development in the region. The project aims to assist ASEAN countries to develop country action proposals highlighting the role of local participation in poverty reduction

efforts, and in so doing, strengthen in-country capacity across sectors involved in rural development and poverty eradication. These country action proposals would be shared at a regional workshop in October 2004 with interested donors/partners to assist ASEAN countries in implementing their action proposals.

21. An activity that could be implemented on a rolling basis under this priority area would build on a previous project “Training of Facilitators on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication,” which Indonesia implemented in 2001 for ASEAN officials. A second training activity has been proposed, focusing on mid-level professionals and practitioners dealing with rural development and poverty eradication. This activity would also address the need for capacity-building of officials in rural development and poverty alleviation administration, highlighted in the priority area on employment and income-generation.
22. Indonesia will also coordinate a regional activity to facilitate experience-sharing by ASEAN countries involved in the World Bank initiative on Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) preparation. This regional activity would assist ASEAN countries identify common concerns and approaches in poverty reduction, and facilitate the promotion of ASEAN priorities to interested partner agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among other partners.
23. The recommended approach and actions for this priority area:
 - a) Strengthen in-country capacity across sectors involved in rural development and poverty eradication to promote local participation:
 - i. Work with the World Bank Institute to implement a project that assists ASEAN countries in developing country action proposals that highlight the role of local participation in poverty reduction efforts; and
 - ii. Conduct intra-ASEAN sharing of experience and lessons learnt in devolving responsibility to local governments in the design, management and sustainability of social programmes.
 - b) Develop activities that facilitate active involvement of all rural development stakeholders in policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation:
 - i. Increase the local communities’ knowledge and awareness of rural poverty initiatives to facilitate local participation in development initiatives;
 - ii. Coordinate activities to train mid-level professionals and practitioners dealing with rural development and poverty eradication; and
 - iii. Coordinate a regional experience-sharing forum for ASEAN countries to identify common concerns and approaches for poverty reduction, and to facilitate promotion of ASEAN’s priorities to ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners and interested international agencies.

F. Narrowing the Development Gap (Coordinator: Viet Nam/ASEAN Secretariat)

24. An important regional priority relevant to cooperation on rural development and poverty eradication is ASEAN’s own process of closer regional integration. In November 2000, the ASEAN Leaders launched the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) to facilitate the integration of ASEAN’s newer members – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV). An IAI Work Plan addressing the special needs of the CLMV countries was adopted in 2002. Among other priorities, the Work Plan’s objectives include poverty alleviation in the CLMV. Regional experience-sharing activities such as those proposed by Indonesia under the priority area on partnerships, local participation and decentralisation would also assist the CLMV countries in developing strategies for poverty reduction.
25. The IAI Work Plan’s component on human resource development is relevant to SOMRDPE’s work. In

2002, SOMRDPE discussed the possibility of closer links with ASEAN Senior Labour Officials. The ASEAN Secretariat could facilitate the SOMRDPE's participation in IAI activities addressing labour and employment priorities which are relevant to SOMRDPE (e.g. social protection).

26. Recommended approach and actions for this priority area:

- a) Support and leverage on the work of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) work plan:
 - i. Continue participation in the IAI's priority area of human resource development and seek participation, through SLOM, in IAI activities addressing labour and employment priorities which are relevant to SOMRDPE (e.g. social protection);
 - ii. Convene a regional workshop on the development of poverty mapping for ASEAN countries to learn from each other and share strategies for poverty eradication, and support the improvement of poverty measurement methodologies in ASEAN.

G. Others

27. Three other priority activities have been identified:

Capacity-building:

- a) Develop a regional volunteers' movement for rural development incorporating a home-stay and work programme in the rural areas of participating ASEAN countries
- b) Establish an exchange programme for young professionals dealing in rural development

Public Information:

- a) Increase national and regional public awareness on rural development and poverty eradication

28. The recommended activity on voluntary movement for rural development aims to tackle a yet-to-be-addressed priority identified since AMRDPE's establishment. This priority calls for the development of a regional rural volunteer programme, possibly including activities to empower and build the capacity of volunteers, facilitators and rural development workers through exchange programmes involving home-stay and voluntary work in the rural areas of participating ASEAN countries. Based on the outcome of the rural volunteer exchange programme, future exchange programmes of young professionals dealing in rural development and poverty eradication could be further developed, emphasising the role of youth leaders/youth workers in sustainable rural development. Indonesia has expressed interest to coordinate both activities.

29. With regard to public information activities, the Philippines will develop a focused project on promoting awareness on rural development and poverty eradication taking into account the importance of sharing information and best practices of ASEAN in addressing poverty and existing initiatives in this area, including the ASEAN Secretariat homepage section on poverty.

30. Non-project activities to raise awareness and share experience on rural development and poverty eradication could be started through a regular SOMRDPE agenda item on exchange of views on rural development and poverty eradication priorities, using as topics the lessons/experiences identified by AMRDPE. Follow-up activities generated by the discussions and exchange could be developed into projects for implementation as appropriate. In this context, the role of NGOs in advocacy and monitoring of inclusive poverty eradication policies and programmes also merits consideration.

Part III: Operationalisation Strategies for Projects

31. To move forward regional cooperation more effectively, ASEAN Member Countries have agreed:

- to take into consideration the need to engage relevant partners from both within and outside ASEAN to jointly implement activities of mutual interest, and to use, where possible cost-sharing mechanisms in implementing priority projects; and
- to use the ASEAN Secretariat to ensure coordination with other relevant ASEAN bodies in implementing commonly shared concerns for rural development and poverty eradication.

32. Options for potential donors in supporting ASEAN's priorities for rural development and poverty eradication would include:

- a) Donor/ international agency identifies ongoing and planned activities which are relevant to the priorities in the Framework Plan;
- b) Align ongoing country programmes/ activities with relevant concepts/priorities of the Framework Plan;
- c) Build a regional component for related on-going projects and activities at bilateral or sub-regional level already running in several ASEAN countries;
- d) Consider joint development of detailed proposals for planned activities whose implementation could be co-funded or cost-shared with donors/partners; and
- e) Invite the participation of representatives from the relevant ASEAN bodies in social development (e.g. labour, social welfare and development) in activities addressing commonly shared concerns/ priorities.

33. Cooperation with other ASEAN bodies is also an important consideration, to further ensure complementation of activities, and avoid unnecessary overlap in formulating and implementing priorities. The ASEAN Secretariat can serve as the channel of communication to aid closer coordination among the various ASEAN committees and senior officials meetings dealing with common concerns.

34. Similarly, closer coordination and linkages can be further pursued with relevant international and regional organisations that share ASEAN's priorities for rural development and poverty reduction. The ASEAN-World Bank joint activity is a good example of such coordination. Other entities with which linkages/joint activities could be considered are the UNDP, the ADB, the Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), and the UNESCAP's Emerging Social Issues Division. The Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA), an NGO affiliated to ASEAN since May 2004, can also join hands with SOMRDPE in addressing regional priorities.

Work Plan on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality (2005 – 2010)⁸

Part I. Background and Strategic Directions

1. The First Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) held from 28 to 31 October 2002 in Luang Prabang, Laos, agreed that the ACW's mission would be to "work for women's advancement in social, economic and political spheres in accordance with the 1988 Declaration on the Advancement of Women in ASEAN and relevant priorities identified by ASEAN Leaders." To implement this mission, the ACW's Terms of Reference calls for, among other strategies, the formulation of "an ASEAN work plan for women's advancement and gender equality, which is anchored on the 1988 Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region."

A. Strategic Directions for Promoting Women's Advancement and Gender Equality in ASEAN

2. The 1988 Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region sets out five directives for women's advancement in the region, namely:
 - i. **to promote and implement equitable and effective participation of women** wherever possible, in all fields and at various levels of political, economic, social and cultural life of society at the national, regional and international levels;
 - ii. **to enable women in the region** to undertake their important role as **active agents in and beneficiaries of development**, particularly in promotion of regional understanding and cooperation and in building more just and peaceful societies;
 - iii. **to integrate in national plans the specific concerns of women** and their role as active agents in and beneficiaries of development, specifically considering their role as a productive force to attain the full development of the human personality;
 - iv. **to design and promote programmes involving the participation of the community and non-governmental women's organisations** towards strengthening national and regional resilience;
 - v. **to strengthen solidarity in the regional and international women forums** by promoting harmonisation of views and positions.
3. The Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA) adopted by ASEAN Leaders in December 1998 supplements the above priorities by highlighting the need for strengthening ASEAN collaboration in combating the trafficking in, and crimes of violence against, women and children; working towards the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, among other international instruments concerning women; and intensifying efforts of the ASEAN Network for Women in Skills Training to enhance the capacity of disadvantaged women to enter the work force.
4. The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) adopted by the 9th ASEAN Summit in October 2003 also seeks to integrate the role of women in building an ASEAN socio-cultural community in line with the vision for an ASEAN Community by 2020. Following the programme of action set by the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord (Bali Concord I), ASEAN leaders have committed to foster cooperation in social development aimed at raising the standard of living of disadvantaged groups and the rural population, with active involvement of all sectors of society, in particular women, youth, and local communities. To address this goal, the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP), succeeding the HPA, recommends regional measures that will:

- i. Promote equitable participation of women in the development process by eliminating all forms of discrimination against them;
 - ii. Implement the eight goals of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region;
 - iii. Strengthen regional collaboration in programmes to combat trafficking in women and children;
 - iv. Develop and implement an ASEAN Work Plan on Women's Advancement Agenda in politics;
 - v. Conduct skills training for out-of-school youth and disadvantaged women;
 - vi. Increase women's access to micro-credit, information systems and basic social services.
5. The Work Plan activities would give effect to the VAP priorities. In addition to the ASEAN mandate, the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, serves as a frame of reference for sharing experiences and lessons in mainstreaming and promoting gender concerns. In the preparatory process leading to the Fourth World Conference, ASEAN countries undertook to share their respective progress of preparation for the Conference at the annual meetings of the then ASEAN Sub-Committee on Women (ASW). All ten Southeast Asian countries (the then ASEAN-Six, as well as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam who would later become members of ASEAN) participated actively at the Conference. After the Conference which adopted the Beijing Platform for Action, the ASW and later the ACW has a regular agenda item on its annual agenda to share experiences in implementing the Beijing Platform priorities.
 6. Priorities for women's advancement and gender equality are also highlighted In the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which call for, among other goals and targets, the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; improvement of maternal health; achievement of universal and equal access to primary education; and combating HIV/AIDS prevalence among young pregnant women.
 7. The special needs and dignity of vulnerable older women and those with disabilities, would also be taken into consideration in implementing activities relevant to skills training, self-employment opportunities, or strengthening capacity of the family and caregivers.

Part II. Priority Areas

8. In all priority areas, socio-cultural issues should be discussed and addressed. The advancement of women and gender equality can be promoted and achieved through the transformation of traditional values and norms to be more gender responsive.

A. Integration and Participation

9. The cross-cutting nature of gender issues has been highlighted since the 1988 Declaration's call for integration of gender needs and concerns into national plans and actions. ASEAN countries report on their respective efforts to promote integration of gender concerns into national plans and programmes through a session devoted to sharing experiences on progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform priorities, at the annual ACW meetings. ASEAN also produces a regular regional report monitoring the implementation of the 1988 Declaration, based on indicators already in use by Member Countries and consolidating inter-country reports on the status of women. The ASEAN Secretariat, in consultation with the ACW, coordinates the

gathering of information for, and compilation of the report. At the First ACW Meeting in 2002, ASEAN countries agreed that this reporting mechanism be synchronised with reporting requirements of the Beijing Platform for Action.

10. An experience commonly shared by governments, bilateral and multilateral development organisations, in efforts to mainstream gender is that progress in gender mainstreaming will be minimal without the support and commitment of the top people; there are changing demands on the governments of the countries with respect to gender mainstreaming, training and awareness-raising; the need to demonstrate attention to gender really does make a difference to development; there are also new challenges with regard to gender mainstreaming in the light of new and emerging concerns that ASEAN Member Countries face in the era of globalisation.
11. Regional action in gender mainstreaming would address the impact of globalisation on women, emerging issues such as trafficking of women, violence against women and the situation of rural women and women migrant workers. Regional interventions would support national capacity to mainstream gender concerns as an integral part of social and economic policy rather than as special sections of social development programmes; and support continued networking of ASEAN women's national machineries.

Activities

- a) Promote regional awareness and strengthen capacity on gender mainstreaming, including within the relevant ASEAN committees and ASEAN Secretariat;
 - b) Intensify collaboration with the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations (ACWO) to address important women's concerns in ASEAN, including the feminisation of poverty;
 - c) Strengthen capacity for research and information-gathering, particularly quantitative information that is disaggregated by sex and age, and including indicators used to monitor activities for gender equality and advancement;
 - d) Document best practices/ innovative strategies undertaken by ASEAN countries to mainstream gender in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of policies and legislation; and
 - e) Increase the participation of women in all aspects of ASEAN activities.
12. The APEC economies have recognised the need for integrating a gender perspective and analysis into areas of cooperation, a more systematic and comprehensive collection of sex-disaggregated data, and increasing the participation of women into all activities. ASEAN countries who are also APEC economies could help identify activities addressing priorities relevant to ASEAN's own priorities.

B. Protection of Women

13. ASEAN's recognition for the protection of women is underscored in the HPA priorities calling for strengthened regional collaboration in combating the trafficking in, and crimes of violence against, women and children; and for working towards the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, among other international instruments concerning women. These instruments would include the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and to Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, as well as adoption of domestic violence laws and anti-trafficking laws.
14. The ACW also has a priority on its regional agenda to address violence against women. ASEAN Member

Countries have also joined in a wider effort organised in collaboration with the UNIFEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat to address gender-based violence. The ACW has also prepared an ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region, which was signed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their 37th Meeting in June 2004.

Activities

- a) Strengthen regional capacity to follow-up to the recommendations of the 2002 Workshop on Gender-Based Violence, including the call made to governments to develop:
 - plans of action and national declarations on the elimination of violence against women;
 - platforms to push for the call include forthcoming inter-governmental events to highlight the issues of violence against women, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25th) to raise awareness and obtain further governmental commitment;
 - a reporting mechanism on incidence of gender-based violence;
 - information, education and communication (IEC) materials on gender-based violence issues for advocacy;
 - regional activities addressing issues related to women workers and violence against them;
 - regional activities emphasizing and establishing male ownership and responsibility to eliminate violence against women.
- b) Work with UN organisations, in particular UNIFEM, to promote the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region, and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- c) Document ASEAN experiences/lessons/ best practices in addressing gender-based violence.
- d) Strengthen management information system on incidence of gender-based violence in all ASEAN countries.
- e) Implement the eight priorities of the Declaration on Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region.

C. Addressing Challenges of Globalisation

15. The role of women in the regional processes for integration is important, both as “active agents in and beneficiaries of development.” The ACW agenda recognises the need to discuss and identify ways to ensure that globalisation is a positive force for reducing poverty, thereby improving the lives of women, particularly the rural women and those displaced through structural changes as a result of economic integration, ways to address the impact of these emerging concerns on the situation of women. At the First ACW Meeting in October 2002, the ACW exchanged views on the theme of “Women in Economics: Access to Economic Resources and Opportunities for Poverty Alleviation.” This exchange of views is an innovation of the ACW and shall continue on ACW’s annual agenda, so that possibilities for coordinating regional action can be further worked out, through an extensive exchange of views and information on existing initiatives on responses to emerging economic concerns for women.

Activities

- a) Develop and intensify research capacity on the negative impact of globalisation on women's lives in order to have an effective understanding and identify subsequent measures of change.
 - b) Support the strengthening of capacities to:
 - i. Implement strategies to improve women's access, participation, control and benefit to micro-credit, information systems, basic social services such as education and health care, to bridge the gender gap.
 - ii. Implement advocacy and training programmes as well as transparent and well-defined processes to enable women migrant workers to be well-informed and prepared for work overseas so as to avoid the potential danger of becoming victims of violence, abuse, or trafficking.
 - iii. Implement strategies – in consultation with the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials – to address the impact of trade liberalisation on women, including issues on working conditions, vulnerabilities and differences that women have in the formal labour market;
 - iv. Put in place multi-sectoral programmes addressing the need for boosting employability and livelihood management skills of women as a means of assisting women's access, participation, control and benefit of economic opportunities and long-term economic well-being of women.
16. As such, the impact of globalisation, trade liberalisation and the advent of information and communications technology (ICT), on women is an important emerging concern that could be addressed as a priority area in the proposed work plan. The 2nd APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women in September 2002 had identified women's entrepreneurship, microenterprise development, and the gender dimension of trade liberalisation as issues to be addressed. Future capacity-building and advocacy activities under the ACW framework could also take into consideration the work of the APEC HRD working group in addressing these concerns at the ASEAN level.

D. Promoting Employability of Women

17. The implementation of the existing regional work programme on women and skills training would address the priority area of the work plan. Future initiatives for promoting employability of women would also address the needs of the CLMV countries with regard to their integration efforts.

Activities

- a) Support formulation of policies and action plans in each ASEAN Member Country to promote skills training and provide opportunities for self-employment and micro-enterprise for women.

Part III. Suggested Strategies to Operationalise Activities

18. This section proposes strategies for ASEAN countries to consider in mobilising resources to implement future activities, taking into account the need to engage relevant partners for joint implementation of activities of mutual interest, and to increasingly use cost-sharing modalities in implementing ASEAN priorities. While the effort to match regional priorities with donor interest shall continue, ASEAN Member Countries can continue in their self-reliant efforts to address women's advancement and gender equality concerns,

19. An effective strategy for operationalising activities would be through partnerships among the ASEAN countries themselves, on the cost-sharing basis, and with other entities such as the UN specialised agencies, ASEAN's Dialogue Partners, international organisations, established non-governmental organisations (such as the ACWO), the business and private sector, and the civil society. Partnerships facilitate "strengthening solidarity in the regional and international women forums" and assist in promoting the harmonisation of views and positions. As women's issues and concerns cuts across all areas of development, partnerships also need to be built among the ASEAN functional committees.
20. Partnerships among ASEAN Member Countries would also bear in mind the priorities of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) where the ASEAN-6 countries (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) would engage in "mentoring" activities to facilitate the smooth integration of the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam) into ASEAN.
21. Accordingly, ASEAN Member Countries shall undertake the following important tasks critical to operationalising ASEAN's priorities for women:
 - identify on-going and planned national projects which could be opened up to other countries for participation;
 - build a regional component for related on-going projects and activities at bilateral or sub-regional level already running in several ASEAN countries;
 - align ongoing country programmes/ activities with relevant concepts/priorities of the ACW;
 - identify areas of expertise in which a country could coordinate development and implementation of a project, preferably on a cost-sharing basis;
 - Consider joint development of detailed proposals for planned activities whose implementation could be co-funded or cost-shared with donors/partners; and
 - Invite the participation of representatives from the relevant ASEAN bodies in social development (e.g. labour, rural development and poverty eradication, social welfare and development) in activities addressing commonly shared concerns/ priorities.
22. Potential donors are also requested to identify ongoing and planned activities which are relevant to ASEAN's priorities for women, so that joint activities addressing these shared priorities could be implemented with ASEAN.

Guidelines On ASEAN's Relations with Civil Society Organisations*

1. A civil society organisation (hereinafter referred to as “CSO”) that is a non-profit making association of ASEAN persons, natural or juridical, organised to promote, strengthen and help realise the aims and objectives of ASEAN cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, medical and technological fields, may be affiliated to ASEAN.
2. For the purpose of the guidelines, such organisations or associations perform functions and activities that are governmental or quasi-governmental in nature but they are not part of the formal structure of ASEAN.
3. It shall be normal for a CSO to establish a working link with an ASEAN body through the ASEAN Secretariat. Basically, the working link shall allow the CSOs to submit written statements to include proposals or positions and other recommendations.
4. ASEAN bodies may, if need be, formulate additional rules on the linkage peculiar to their respective needs and practices. These additional rules should be subject to the approval of the ASEAN Standing Committee.
5. The main objectives of affiliation are:
 - a) To draw the CSOs into the mainstream of ASEAN activities so that they are kept informed of major policies, directives and decisions of ASEAN and are given the opportunity and the privilege of participating in ASEAN activities;
 - b) To ensure interaction and fruitful relationships between the existing ASEAN bodies and the CSOs; and
 - c) To help promote the development of a people-centered ASEAN Community.
6. All applications for CSO affiliation shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of ASEAN. If the ASEAN Secretariat considers the application in conformity with the Guidelines, it shall be referred to the appropriate link body, or when an appropriate link body cannot be identified, the ASEAN National Secretariats, for their views. After four months, unless there is an objection, the application shall be submitted to the ASEAN Standing Committee for its consideration.
7. Application for affiliation shall include, at a minimum, information regarding the nature and purpose of the application of the CSO, its constitution and by-laws, a copy of its registration papers, its membership, background on its key officials, its function, activities, and projects, and its link body.
8. Subject to paragraph 6 above, the Secretary-General shall formally present, with his recommendations, applications for affiliation to the ASEAN Standing Committee which shall consider the applications using, among others, the following criteria:
 - a) As a general rule, only a CSO whose membership is confined to the ASEAN nationals may be considered for affiliation with ASEAN;
 - b) Approval of application for affiliation of a CSO with ASEAN shall be based primarily upon the assessment of the positive contribution which such a CSO could make to the enhancement, strengthening and realisation of the aims and objectives of ASEAN;
 - c) Affiliation status with ASEAN may not be granted to a CSO if it has objectives, activities or projects which are contrary to or inconsistent with the aims and objectives of ASEAN embodied in the Bangkok Declaration and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord;
 - d) The objectives of the CSO's activities should contribute towards achieving community building that is

in line with one or more of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community – the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community; and

- e) A CSO whose membership comes from a relatively even spread of the ASEAN Member Countries may be allowed affiliation, provided that ASEAN is satisfied that the CSO merits affiliation and the non-participating Member Countries have given their consent to the CSO and provided further that membership shall remain open for other Member Countries.

9. An affiliated CSO shall enjoy the following privileges:

- a) It may use the name “ASEAN” and display the official ASEAN logo in correspondence and communications and its official meetings so long as the displaying of the logo is non-commercial in nature;
- b) It may submit written statements or recommendations and views on policy matters or on significant events or regional or international concerns, to the ASEAN Standing Committee through the ASEAN Secretariat;
- c) It may submit its own project proposals for Third Party funding, to be channeled through the ASEAN Secretariat, to the ASEAN Standing Committee for approval;
- d) It may initiate programmes of activities for presentation to its link body for appropriate action;
- e) At the discretion of the Chairman of the link body, it may, through its representative, attend meetings of the link body for consultation on matters and issues of direct concern to the CSO;
- f) For purposes of doing research for its projects, it may be allowed access to the ASEAN documents on a selective basis in consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat and or its link body;
- g) Subject to rules and regulations, it may be allowed the use of the facilities of the ASEAN Secretariat for its official meetings and other official activities in Jakarta;
- h) It shall be encouraged to be self-reliant in terms of its material requirements; and
- i) The ASEAN Secretariat shall provide CSOs with key ASEAN publications every year.

10. As a general rule, none of the foregoing privileges in paragraph 9 will be extended to organisations not formally affiliated with ASEAN.

11. All affiliated CSOs shall be required to comply with the following:

They shall undertake in writing to abide by the policies, guidelines, directives, and other decisions of ASEAN;

- a) They shall undertake to advance ASEAN interests and promote the awareness of ASEAN’s principles and activities;
- b) They shall be held responsible for their actions, especially those found detrimental to ASEAN as a whole;
- c) They shall invite participation of officials of ASEAN Member Countries at their meetings and activities;
- d) They shall submit, annually, a written summary of their activities to the ASEAN Standing Committee through the ASEAN Secretariat; and
- e) They shall inform the ASEAN Secretariat of changes in their officials and memberships, as well as changes of address.

12. They shall endeavour to link up with national organisations accredited officially to ASEAN National Secretariats and echo their activities in advancing ASEAN interests. In so doing, the affiliated CSO can expand their membership or establish linkages and informal ties with national organisations in ASEAN.

13. Upon recommendations by the ASEAN Secretariat, after complaint has been lodged by an ASEAN link body or an ASEAN Member Country, the ASEAN Standing Committee shall, at its discretion, terminate the affiliation of CSOs if:
- a) They engage in acts inimical to ASEAN or any of the ASEAN Member Country;
 - b) They act in contrary to the aims, objectives and fundamental principles of ASEAN;
 - c) They are found to have committed gross misconduct which brings disrepute to ASEAN;
 - d) They are inactive, defunct or fail to submit an annual summary of their activities, as required under paragraph 11.e. for three years in succession; and
 - e) They change their constitutions, officials and membership resulting in their inability thereafter to adhere to the guidelines.
14. CSOs whose affiliation have been terminated under paragraph 13 above, shall not take legal action against any ASEAN Member Country or the ASEAN Secretariat. However, they may appeal to the ASEAN Standing Committee for a consideration of the termination. The decision of the ASEAN Standing Committee shall be final and binding.
15. The Member Countries through the ASEAN Secretariat shall regularly monitor the activities of the CSOs and their relations with ASEAN, and recommend to the ASEAN Standing Committee appropriate measures to deal with CSOs that have not acted in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph 11.
16. A CSO whose affiliation is terminated shall be denied exercise of the privileges provided under paragraph 9. Such termination shall be made public.

* Versions of the Guidelines prior to March 2006 used the term “non-governmental organisations” instead of “civil society organisations”.

Notes

1. The original Guidelines were adopted at the 5th Meeting of the 19th ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), Manila, 16-18 June 1986.
2. The 2nd Meeting of the 39th ASC, Jakarta, 18-19 January 2006, revised the original guidelines into its present form. The 39th ASC adopted the above version of the Guidelines on 3 April 2006.

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Statement of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference to the 11th ASEAN Summit

More than 120 participants from civil society organizations from all the ten ASEAN states took part in a regional conference on the theme of **“Building a Common Future Together”**. The conference was held at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) in Shah Alam from 7 to 9 December 2005. It was organized by the Center for ASEAN Studies UiTM with the support and cooperation of a number of Malaysian civil society organizations. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Dato Seri Syed Hamid Albar opened the Conference.

This is the first time ASEAN civil society has been invited by ASEAN Heads of State to present the conclusions of their deliberations to the 11th ASEAN Summit with its theme of **“One Vision, One Identity, One Community”**. The participants of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference welcome this unprecedented gesture, and would like to convey their appreciation to the ASEAN Heads of States for this long awaited opportunity in our region.

For a number of years now, various ASEAN civil society organizations and networks, including trade unions, have been meeting to reflect on ASEAN’s role and future and to discuss specific concerns ranging from the environment to human rights. The ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA) for instance, which was launched in 2000 is one such example of a collective endeavour that seeks to address issues of relevance to the region. More recently, in October of this year, the Southeast Asia Committee for Advocacy (SEACA) with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, organized a regional conference on Civil Society Engagement in ASEAN, in Bangkok.

Over the last 20 years, civil society has come a long way. The emergence of a multitude of civil society organizations has increased the articulation of local and national concerns and strengthened citizens’ participation in political processes. Consequently, democratic accountability has somewhat increased and, in some instances, a closer bond has developed between state and society. This has contributed in no small measure to social cohesion and a degree of inter-ethnic unity and harmony in the midst of cultural and religious diversity.

At the same time, individual ASEAN countries have achieved considerable economic and social progress. In some of our countries, political institutions have also acquired a significant degree of resilience. Perhaps ASEAN’s most significant accomplishment is its staying power. This organization has expanded to cover the whole of Southeast Asia’s 558 million people. Today, it is the world’s most diverse ethnic, cultural and religious regional entity. That in itself is something that ASEAN and its people can be justly proud of. Now, the goal of an ASEAN Community by 2020 as stated in the Vientiane Action Plan 2004 is timely, and civil society participation is needed to realize that vision.

Still, there are monumental challenges ahead, and civil society organizations deliberated on some of these under the theme **“Building Our Common Future Together”**. We identified five sub-themes for in-depth analysis. They are Human Dignity; Economy and Trade; Environment and Natural Resources Management; Women, Youth and Indigenous Groups; and ASEAN Identity and Media. The following are the ten main issues and proposals that emerged from two and a half days of debate and discussion.

ISSUES AND PROPOSALS

ISSUE: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Civil society participants recognized the need for more openness and transparency at all levels of the ASEAN

power structure in order to secure greater accountability and allow civil society to effectively play their roles as watchdogs, monitors and early warning systems. Towards this end, the deep feeling was that civil society was not getting access to accurate, relevant and timely information on matters of concern to the people.

PROPOSAL ONE

As a first step toward opening up ASEAN to the people, participants at the Conference urge the Eminent Persons Group already established to deliberate the ASEAN Charter, to involve civil society and other interested groups through public hearings in all ASEAN countries so that we can ensure that there are benchmarks in developing an ASEAN Charter and that these are in conformity with international standards and reflective of universal values embodied in ASEAN's religions and cultures.

ISSUE: PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Despite its 38 years of existence, ASEAN does not have mechanisms in place to engage civil society. This is a major stumbling block to achieving the ASEAN vision of integration and community building.

PROPOSAL TWO

Participants called for the immediate review of current accreditation procedures to allow for all segments of civil society and all stakeholders to be part of ASEAN. This will remove impediments to meaningful engagement and bring ASEAN closer to the people. Some suggestions in this regard include:

- Establishing a mechanism such as a Non-Governmental Liaison Center or a Permanent Civil Society Consultative Forum composed of civil society organizations independent from the governments and other influences. This will help to systematically channel civil society inputs to the ASEAN Secretariat and other ASEAN processes.
- Helping to build the capacity of civil society to address regional issues. Here, civil society wishes to state its willingness to work towards strengthening of civil society organizations in countries where there is such a need. Civil society for its part also realizes that it must act in concert, with courage and integrity, and ensure it does not become a rubber stamp for any predetermined decisions. At the same time, civil society appreciates the importance of adopting a balanced, rational and principled approach to challenges confronting ASEAN.

ISSUE: NO COMMUNITY WITHOUT THE PEOPLES

The notion of an "ASEAN Community" has remained elusive and illusory because the organization is perceived as being overly bureaucratic, elitist and top-down in its approach.

PROPOSAL THREE

Participants urge that the existing ASEAN Parliamentary Caucus be strengthened with a view to eventually transforming it into the ASEAN Parliament that can carry the voices of all ASEAN peoples.

ISSUE: VISIONS WITHOUT IMPLEMENTATION

Despite numerous Vision Statements, Plans of Action and Declarations that ASEAN leaders have committed to, significant segments of society remain weak and vulnerable and continue to be denied their basic human rights.

PROPOSAL FOUR

Civil society urges the ASEAN Summit to take firm and concrete steps to implement all its commitments, including those for the protection of women and children as well as those under the ASEAN Security Plan of Action and the Vientiane Action Programme (2004-2010), including :

- i. Establishing a network of cooperation among existing human rights mechanisms and initiatives. In this respect, civil society welcomes the proposal by the Malaysian government to work towards a regional human rights mechanism in 2006;
- ii. Creating an ASEAN human rights commission which would serve as a channel for the articulation of human rights grievances at the regional; level and as a avenue for proposing solutions to national governments,
- iii. Developing an ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of workers, including migrant workers;
- iv. Establishing an ASEAN Commission on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children;
- v. Undertaking effective measures to protect vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, refugees and migrant workers, and
- vi. Continuing to promote and emphasize the role of education and public awareness in relation to human rights.

ISSUE: CHANGING NATURE OF CHALLENGES

There are far too many major transboundary challenges relating to the environment like the haze,, health, especially HIV/AIDS and now bird flu, human security, migration and labor that the region is facing.

PROPOSAL FIVE

Participants urge the ASEAN Summit to reconsider the ‘ASEAN way’ of dealing with these transboundary challenges so that swift and effective action can be taken in the interest of the people. The principle of consensus should not hinder ASEAN from acting decisively on behalf of justice when the situation so demands.

ISSUE: CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Some parts of the region are burdened with the suppression of civil and political rights and continue to suffer under dictatorships. As a result, millions of people are denied social justice and human dignity. This tragic situation has led to the stigmatization of the entire region and ASEAN is compelled to pay a heavy price in terms of its international credibility and is constrained in its ability to play a leading role in the regional and global arena.

PROPOSAL SIX

The 11th ASEAN Summit should act immediately to end such suppression. It should harness all its resources to persuade all its members to adhere to a rules-based framework which gives priority to the rights and interests of the people and adheres to the tenets of good governance. The political empowerment of the people is essential for the emergence of a genuinely free and stable ASEAN community.

ISSUE: TRADE INJUSTICES AND INEQUITIES

Rapid globalization, with its calls for deregulation, privatization and inappropriate liberalization, can create a race to the bottom, where social, environmental and labor standards are compromised. The lives and livelihoods of our rural communities, especially farmers and fisherfolk, have been devastated in many parts of the region. The plight of our urban poor has also worsened dramatically. Employment and the welfare of workers are also threatened.

On-going world trade negotiations are mired in controversies, with many of the proposals of developed countries threatening the sustainable development prospects of developing countries, in areas such as services liberalization and market access for non-agricultural products.

To compound matters, ASEAN as a bloc is now pursuing trade and economic frameworks and agreements with non-ASEAN countries. The wide scope of these agreements that include investment, intellectual property, services, government procurement, market access, labor and environment is of growing concern as they contain commitments and obligations that are even more burdensome than those of existing WTO agreements.

PROPOSAL SEVEN

Civil society participants at this conference therefore call on ASEAN nations to :

- adopt economic and employment policies that satisfy the highest standards of social, economic, civil and political rights;
- consider institutionalizing civil society participation in decision making on socio-economic issues through an ASEAN Economic and Social Advisory Council;
- be open and transparent in the conduct of all trade negotiations;
- undertake comprehensive impact assessments of trade negotiations at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels;
- maintain a strong position at the forthcoming Sixth Hong Kong Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization with regards to the liberalization of trade in services, based on the joint proposal of a number of ASEAN countries;
- defer any conclusion of bilateral free trade agreements with developed countries until there are broad-based consultations with all stakeholders;
- develop rules and codes of conduct to ensure corporate accountability among business entities in ASEAN;

- safeguard the rights of consumers and address consumer protection issues comprehensively;
- establish mechanisms for broad consultations with civil society organizations both at the national and regional levels and
- ensure trade justice and equity for all ASEAN peoples.

ISSUE: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Despite a long history of cooperation and scores of legal instruments, the region is not on a path towards environmental sustainability. Environmental degradation in the ASEAN region is now being exacerbated by human and man-made disasters. Reversing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and unsustainable patterns of development is proving to be a monumental task.

PROPOSAL EIGHT

Civil society appeals to all ASEAN Member States to:

- Prioritize integrated natural resources management in all national development plans and strategies and work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and targets;
- MDGs implementation in the region should be premised upon the inter-linkages between all the Goals, especially Goals 1(Poverty), 7(Environmental Sustainability) and 8 (Global Partnership for Development);
- Allocate adequate funds for implementing these plans and policies instead of spending exorbitant sums on military and defense equipment;
- Tackle corruption head on because it is diverting resources that could be mobilized for socio-economic development both at national and regional levels;
- Regulate corporate behavior and ensure it does not undermine efforts to ensure environmental and social sustainability;
- Implement the Rio Principles, in particular Principle 10 (Broad-based Participation), Principle 14 (Prevention) and Principle 15 (Precaution); and
- Support the establishment of an ASEAN Civil Society Consultative Forum on Environment and Sustainable Development to allow for civil society inputs into ASEAN processes relating to the environment.

ISSUE: EMPOWERING WOMEN, YOUTH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Civil society participants identified several difficulties in relation to women, children, youth and indigenous people. Women, including female migrant workers continue to disproportionately bear the burdens of poverty, ill-health, violence and all forms of discrimination.

In some parts of the region there is a lack of opportunities for youth participation in decision making and a lack of decent productive work which in turn leads to social unrest, drug abuse and rising crime rates. This is totally unacceptable especially since demographics indicate that the majority of ASEAN's citizens are young.

The unique needs and interests, special knowledge of our indigenous peoples and local communities, and their access to land and natural resources, in particular, are not being adequately safeguarded.

PROPOSAL NINE

Our population structure demands that women, youth and indigenous people are adequately represented at all levels of decision making processes within ASEAN. Civil Society urges greater focus and attention to women, youth and indigenous peoples. Recognizing their rights and broadening their participation in society will go a long way in creating a safer, more stable and caring ASEAN community. ASEAN governments should also ensure that they have equitable access to healthcare services particularly in relation to reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

ISSUE: ROLE OF EDUCATION AND THE MEDIA IN FORGING AN ASEAN IDENTITY

The absence of a truly people-centered ASEAN identity is very glaring today. Thus far, ASEAN has concentrated on political stability and economic goals. There is a need for a community driven, collective ASEAN consciousness to be nurtured through better and deeper understanding of our common history, culture and diversity.

PROPOSAL TEN

The media and educational institutions have a very important role in this. The ASEAN media and ASEAN journalists should generate information and analysis from an ASEAN perspective and thereby help to reinforce an ASEAN identity. Civil Society urges governments to encourage the media in such efforts. The media and all educational institutions should emphasize those shared values that are rooted in all our religions and cultural philosophies so as to nurture this much needed sense of togetherness amongst all peoples of ASEAN.

In CONCLUSION, civil society would like to thank ASEAN leaders for this opportunity and hope we can have more such interactions in the future. Civil Society is of the view that we have now arrived at a critical juncture in ASEAN's evolution as an organization. We have this opportunity before us to transform ASEAN from an inter-governmental organization into a genuine people-centered community. We reiterate that there can be no ASEAN Community without the people. Civil society is eager to contribute towards this laudable goal which will help secure a more just, peaceful ASEAN for us and for future generations.

Footnotes

¹ Note only excerpts of the VAP pertaining to the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community are included. The full text can be found at: <http://www.aseansec.org/VAP-10th%20ASEAN%20Summit.pdf>

² Tenth ASEAN Summit, Vientiane, 29-30 November 2004. See: <http://www.aseansec.org/16474.htm>

³ Adopted by the 1st ASEAN SOMSWD meeting on 9-10 October 2002, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

⁴ Adopted by the Fourth Meeting of the Asean Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE) on 7 October 2004.

⁵ These priority areas were endorsed by the 4th SOMRDPE held in Yangon, Myanmar on 15-16 December 2003.

⁶ Announced when Leaders adopted the e-ASEAN Framework Agreement in November 2000.

⁷ The Senior Labour Officials Meeting's (SLOM) work on social protection focuses more on the formal sector.

⁸ Adopted at the 3rd ASEAN ACW meeting in Yangon from 29 November - 1 December 2004