



## JOINT STATEMENT

### 17<sup>th</sup> AUN and 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN+3 Educational Forum

#### *“ASEAN+3 in an Era of Global Uncertainty: Responses and Optimism”*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. We, the students of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) Member Universities and the Plus Three countries, gathered on 25 May 2017 at National University of Singapore on the occasion of the 17<sup>th</sup> AUN and 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers' Contest.
2. We recognize the emergence of contemporary global uncertainty, particularly security concerns rising from the increasing interconnectedness of global affairs, especially the intensification of globalization in the digital age. Accordingly, we are fully aware that it is important for us, as global citizens and future leaders of the region, to preserve our region from security risks as well as to prevent it from possible future uncertainty, which includes but not limited to political security, economic and environmental issues.
3. We acknowledge with appreciation the Chairman Statement of the 19<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit, held on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on the importance of APT cooperation in maintaining and promoting peace, stability and development in East Asian region. In this context, the APT leaders decided to further strengthen cooperation in both traditional and non-traditional security issues such as terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crime, cyber security, maritime security, climate change, disaster management, sustainable water resource management, food security, energy security, and pandemic diseases and trade related capacity building.
4. We support our governments, APT sectoral bodies and relevant sectors in reinforcing their collective efforts towards the achievement of peace, security, and prosperity in East Asia and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
5. With these statements, we, as future leaders, hereby declare the following recommendations and statements with regards to the achievement of preservation and prevention of APT region in an era of global uncertainty.

## **II. RECOGNIZING THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY**

### **A. ECONOMIC ISSUES**

**Recognizing** the steady increase in regionalism by economic blocs from all around the world;

**Acknowledging** the relevance of regionalism for increased global competitiveness as well as attracting foreign direct investments, which are key in facing various global challenges;

**Realizing** that multilateral discussions within these regional blocs result in a higher degree of bargaining leverage in their respective trade negotiations and geopolitical influence;

**Keeping in mind** that the APT region has now established itself as a strategic region driven by a more robust labor market, increased prices of goods and services, and a higher level of global demand;

**Recognizing** that a growing economic potential may not always ensure the sustainability and inclusivity;

**Acknowledging** that the APT region predominantly consists of developing countries, and that they are prone to income inequality as they progress to an advanced economy according to Kuznet's theory of economic development;

**Recognizing** the need to fulfill the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all; and

**Noting** the stronger demand for APT policies that ensure the economic inclusivity within the region as a result of increased regional collaboration.

### **B. CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Recognizing** the imminent danger of industrialization, carbon emission, depletion of natural resources, and various forms of environmental degradation and pollution;

**Gravely concerned** that many of the above-mentioned issues may result in or have resulted in disruption of economic activities, natural disasters, extinction of life forms, rising sea levels, abnormal weathers, and ultimately, climate change;

**Believing** that it is paramount that APT put together their resources, share best practices, and work together to address the above-mentioned concerns;

**Reaffirming** some of the past and current Policy Framework on the above-mentioned environmental concerns, which include ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), Blueprint 2009-2015, ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Change, ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Cooperation (2016-2020), ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);

**Emphasizing** the need to improve the efficiency of the current fund allocation system; and

**Highlighting** the significance of collaboration with the private sector.

## C. GLOBAL INSECURITY

**Noting with deep concern** the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (hereafter 'ISIS') especially in Southeast Asia;

**Noting further** the gravity of ISIS influence in Southeast Asia, which has been and will be the key recruitment area for ISIS, due to its socio-economic and demographic conditions;

**Deeply concerned** by the perturbed situation in Asia caused by the nuclear threats posed by North Korea, the ISIS threats, and cybercrimes;

**Noting** that universal nuclear disarmament is essential to the prevention of nuclear warfare and that it can only be achieved when the APT develops concrete actions;

**Expressing our grave concern** with North Korea's repeated nuclear tests since 2006 and the repeated missile launches this year;

**Recognizing** that the instability in the Korean Peninsula seriously impacts the APT region and beyond;

**Taking note of** the underlying factors that prompt the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Asia-Pacific region to be complicated power relations;

**Alarmed** by the fact that advanced persistent threats – financial theft, data theft, reputational damage, and intrusion into the critical information infrastructure – remain one of the biggest threats in the APT region; and

**Recognizing** how the impact of a cyber attack in one country can spill over to another country in the current inter-connected society.

## III. ACTION PLAN TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY

### A. ECONOMIC ISSUES

As the future leaders of ASEAN+3 Region, we:

1. **Strongly urge** the APT Member States to strive to develop mechanisms proposed in the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM), which have the following objectives:
  - a) better quality and the strategic expansion of educational institutions;
  - b) provide free pre-primary, primary, and secondary level education; and
  - c) facilitate a better scheme for the mobility of financially-challenged university students within the ASEAN region.
2. **Recommend** the Member States to streamline expected graduate attributes including:
  - a) creative and technically proficient graduate;
  - b) globally concerned citizen;
  - c) responsible decision maker; and
  - d) reflective lifelong learner

3. **Strongly suggest** a more comprehensive training program and school-to-work transition for persons with disability (PWD) by:
  - a) aligning vocation training programs with employer expectations within each Member State;
  - b) establishing strong employer partnerships with vocational educational institutions; and
  - c) minimizing frictional and graduate unemployment.
4. **Recommend** a consolidated database of raw material and manufacturing service providers in the APT region for inter-regional and intra-regional transactions;
5. **Call upon** the Member States to create a framework and a set of quality assurance criteria for the processing and distribution of intermediate goods;
6. **Recommend** a more integrated APT network of trade routes, based on the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025;
7. **Call upon** the APT Member States to establish a national, inter-corporation labor council which aims to:
  - a) encourage the participation of all registered companies, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), as well as relevant Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO); and
  - b) ensure the implementation of fair working conditions as stated in the succeeding clause, and is aligned with the objectives of the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM).
8. **Encourage** the Member States to evaluate the current working conditions in the country, raise awareness on the issue, and formulate a set of fair working conditions including but not limited to:
  - a) working hour;
  - b) fair wage;
  - c) health benefits;
  - d) safety regulations;
  - e) equal employment opportunity provisions on:
    - i) gender equality; and
    - ii) persons with disability
9. **Encourage** the Member States to adopt a digital financial inclusion framework as proposed in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 by:
  - a) streamlining the process of efficient and responsible delivery of financial services;
  - b) fostering application and approval policies that puts priority in the financially excluded and underserved population which includes:
    - i) microfinancing of MSME; and
    - ii) conditional cash transfer for education, health, and maternal needs.
10. **Call upon** the Member States to promote cross-sector collaboration effort with NGOs and/or private institutions, also known as Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), in implementing policies and programs for Member States in the aspects including:
  - a) funding and profit structures
  - b) long-term physical and digital infrastructure contracts
  - c) securing operational efficiency of project management

## **B. CLIMATE CHANGE**

11. **Recommend** the Member States to adopt the framework adopted in ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Changes (2012) regarding:
  - a) mitigation of environmental issues;
  - b) adaptation to climate change, which includes:
    - i) sharing with other Member States knowledge and experience on disaster resilience; and
    - ii) developing ASEAN work program to better assess loss and damage, as well as manage and reduce risk
12. **Further recommend** the Member States to take following actions:
  - a) collaborate in developing a regional framework which identifies the collective mitigation objectives for all APT countries, helps each member country to prioritize its own development goals in relation to the regional mitigation goals; and
  - b) share and collaborate on research efforts, technology, and good practices for renewable resources.
13. **Urge** the Member States to boost their effort in human capacity building through implementing actions including:
  - a) conducting assessments to study the current level of environmental knowledge of the citizens and identify key areas and key problems that need to be addressed;
  - b) raising the public awareness on environmental issues through:
    - i) education;
    - ii) simulator models and drills;
  - c) training employees of enterprises, especially multinational corporations, with the aim of passing down best practices in the business and to contextualize environmental awareness in the business setting; and
  - d) introducing environmental education as part of the school curriculum or extra-curricular activities.
14. **Encourage** all Member States to support the development of environmental innovations among enterprises and individuals by means of grants or other forms of incentives;
15. **Urge** the Member States to review their fund handling practices, and assess the effectiveness of fund allocation, and if any, issues with the existing sources of climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund, Green Investment Fund, Adaptation Fund, and the East Asia Climate Partnership;
16. **Call on** the relevant bodies to enhance the transparency and accountability of funding dedicated for environmental issues through:
  - a) close-tracking and detailed reporting of the funding; and
  - b) exploring the possibility of the development of a shared database, which will power real-time tracking, accurate accounting, report-generation and data analysis.
17. **Strongly encourage** the Member States to establish collaborative relations with the NGOs and the private sector in the effort to combat climate change, through ways of:
  - a) promoting the concept of Creating Shared Value (CSV) in the private sector;

- b) urging businesses to contribute to other areas, such as energy efficiency, transport, and land use, on top of the renewable energy sector in their commitments to alleviate environmental issues; and
- c) assisting businesses in the implementation of impact evaluation.

## C. GLOBAL INSECURITY

18. **Encourage** the Member States to build a systematic multilateral anti-terrorism system in the areas of:
- a) shared database of terrorists and terrorist organizations; and
  - b) supervision of the intra-regional borders.
19. **Further encourage** the Member States to carry out meticulous and accurate inspection of travel documents and identification in the borders through the means of:
- a) renovation of relevant technologies for the detection of forgeries, such as:
    - i) visualizer of magnetic properties that scan documents with magnetic security features;
    - ii) ID reference database.
  - b) education and training of border police and customs officials; and
  - c) cooperation with the private sector, airlines in particular, and encourage them to subscribe to the International Police Organization (INTERPOL) i-Checklist System.
20. **Call upon** the Member States to institutionalize and enforce a verification process of the holistic education through measures such as but not limited to:
- a) carry out a regular inspection on the curriculum; and
  - b) monitor lecturers
21. **Strongly recommend** all Member States to devise legally binding instruments, in compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), that criminalize terrorist financing;
22. **Urge** the Member States that have signed but not yet ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to ratify it as soon as possible to accelerate the denuclearization process;
23. **Request** all Member States to comply with the responsibilities set forth by the CTBT upon its ratification;
24. **Encourage** the Member States to ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the specifics of which include:
- a) prohibiting non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) from receiving, manufacturing, and acquiring any form of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
  - b) protecting the Parties' inalienable right to develop, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; and
  - c) supporting the Parties' right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

25. **Encourage** the Nuclear-Weapon-State (NWS) to construct and maintain bilateral or multilateral legal arrangements on the following issues:
- a) no-first-use of nuclear weapons; and
  - b) reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in the national military and security doctrines by increasing planning for non-nuclear strike options.
26. **Request** the Member States to consider the sector of telecommunication and internet as public infrastructure which entails the control by national authority, and therefore invite the States to institutionalize fixed standards for the following areas:
- a) the operation of website; and
  - b) the operation of software and application.
27. **Further request** the Member States to enact and enforce their legal instruments to tackle the transnational nature of cybercrimes in a compliance to:
- a) the conduct and effect theory of criminal law in the event the place where the conduct is launched and the effect is felt differ in jurisdiction; and
  - b) collaboration with ASEANAPOL and INTERPOL.
28. **Call upon** the Member States to establish two-track education system specifically targeting general public and professionals respectively, the details of which are as follows:
- a) education for general public:
    - i) enhance digital literacy of general public; and
    - ii) conduct public seminar and workshops, advertisements and campaigns, regional youth and elderly center for IT education.
  - b) education for experts:
    - i) foster experts and facilitate the exchange of information amongst the professionals; and
    - ii) hold the ASEAN+3 meeting or conference in which experts of cyber security, officials from relevant ministries, NGOs, private actors, and non-state actors take part.
29. **Encourage** the Member States to build cyber capacity through the organizations such as but not limited to:
- a) ASEAN Cyber Capacity Programme (ACCP); and
  - b) Cybergreen-ASEAN Program.

#### **IV. CLOSING**

The realization of this Joint Statement will be accomplished through enhanced cooperation among the network of the ASEAN+3 students and relevant stakeholders. This Joint Statement will be submitted to the ASEAN+3 Senior Officials Meeting on Youth (SOMY) through the ASEAN Secretariat.

**Adopted** in Singapore this 25 May 2017

**Acknowledged by:**

The student participants of the 17<sup>th</sup> AUN and 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers' Contest