

ASEAN University Network
15th AUN and 4th ASEAN+3 Educational Forum 2015
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia
22-23 January 2015

***“Developing ASEAN+3 Economic Integrated Community: Issues on Gender Equality,
Minority Groups, and Persons with Disabilities”***

I. Introduction

1. We, the students of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) Member Universities and the Plus Three countries, gathered on the 23rd of January year 2015 at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia on the occasion of the 15th AUN and 4th ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers' Contest.
2. We acknowledge with conviction that an inclusive community means giving equal opportunities and equal rights to the marginalised sectors without any discrimination on gender, and race. Furthermore, an inclusive community in the ASEAN+3 region also means the inclusion of the minority groups and the persons with disabilities (PWD) to the economic activities of the region.
3. We note with satisfaction the efforts of our governments, universities, and other sectors in ensuring an inclusive and people-oriented community in the ASEAN+3 region.
4. We reaffirm our roles as future leaders of the region in ensuring a conducive and inclusive environment for everyone without any discrimination, and that we believe that an inclusive and fair community will be beneficial to the development and growth both in the economic and socio-cultural aspect of the region.
5. We believe the issues of gender equality, minority groups, and persons with disabilities (PWD), can be solved if we continue to work together, support one another, and learn from each other. And with this, as future leaders of the region renew our commitment to help further flourish the relationship of the Member States of the ASEAN+3, and at the same time harmonising the understanding of each other despite of the diversity and various differences within the region. Together as one region, we can work together effectively and efficiently towards the attainment of our individual and collective goals.
6. With these statements, we, as future leaders, hereby declare the following recommendations and statements with regards to the inclusion of everyone regardless of gender, the minority groups, and persons with disabilities.

II. Gender Issues

Bearing in mind the economic benefits for the ASEAN+3 region if the potential of everyone in the community will be maximized, we as future leaders hereby suggest the following:

Political Issues on Gender

7. *Encourage* ASEAN+3 countries to reach social justice by promoting gender equality in the region within public and private sectors to address this issue;
8. *Highly Recommend* ASEAN+3 Member States to adopt focal points across the judiciary, legislative, and executive bodies as well as ministries to promote gender equality in public sectors;
9. *Strongly suggest* ASEAN+3 Member States to work towards a more substantive equal representation of women in decision-making level of both public and private sectors,
 - a. To recommend gender-sensitized laws and policies to include more women in both private and public sectors based on merits,
 - b. To urge Member States to report annually to the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) on level of women's participation in Member States;
10. *Endorse* ASEAN+3 Member States to work on modifying the operations of the ACWC (Commission on the Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children) as follows:
 - a. To improve the quality of decision making in ACWC in which it shall involve independent experts on the issue of gender equality,
 - b. To develop protection and redress mechanism for tackling the gender inequality in the region,
 - c. To encourage ASEAN Secretariat to increase funding to support the activities taken by the ACWC;

Issues on Gender in Education

11. *Call upon* the ASEAN+3 Member States to set up an ASEAN+3 Centre for the Empowerment of Women (AIEW) to empower women in the region and its dialogue partner countries in integrating them into the decision making sphere of both public and private sectors;
 12. *Strongly urge* the ASEAN+3 Member Countries to promote gender equal practices through the virtues of education,
 - a. To incorporate gender issues into existing subjects in the curriculum in schools across Member States,
 - b. To draw the attention to women's access to tertiary education in the STEM (sciences, technology, engineering, and math fields). Women's participation in STEM assures healthier economic growth and greater global innovation,
 - c. To have a forum promoting non-discrimination against gender diversity in order to promote awareness on marginalized genders;
 - d. To work towards substantive equality of women to education;
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Economic Participation

13. *Call for* ASEAN+3 Member States to foster the process of adopting ASEAN Convention on Elimination of Violence against Women and establishing ASEAN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers;

- a. To emphasize the need for the protection of female domestic workers, especially those who work abroad, since the employer-employee relation still remains unequivocal, increasing the vulnerability of female domestic workers,
- b. To promote micro-saving schemes and financial literacy workshops to be made accessible and affordable for transient or migrant workers to ensure sustained remittances and for further investments in home countries,
- c. To recommend an incubation laboratory comprising of Small and Medium Enterprises' (SMEs) experienced entrepreneurs to provide training for transient workers who have undergone micro-saving schemes on how to invest and create businesses in their home countries;

14. *Urge* ASEAN+3 Member States to inspire and support women especially those in remote areas to actively participate in economic activities, particularly setting up SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises);

Funding Mechanism

15. *Request* the collaboration between ASEAN+3 and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to seek for financial assistances with low or zero interest rate to development projects related to gender equality, including but not limited to:

- a. Basic utilities
- b. Sanitation and healthcare facilities and amenities
- c. Transportation
- d. Internet access and information communication technologies

16. *Endorse* collaboration among ASEAN+3 Member States, multinational corporations (MNCs), social enterprises and civil society organizations to attain common interests as a step to ensure social justice by tapping on the existing platform provided by the ASEAN Business Forum;

III. Minority Groups

Having faced with the reality that the ASEAN+3 region has many minority groups whose potential and talents are not maximized, we as future leaders of the region, believe that an inclusive policy measures and recommendation should be taken into consideration to provide opportunities and to include the minority groups to the economic activity of the region. Therefore, we hereby recommend the following

Recognizing the problems regarding minority groups

17. *Realize* that all countries have their own priorities and national interests which may at times conflict with the interest of minority groups that is why policies enforced do not necessarily benefit all groups of people;
18. *Acknowledge* that minority groups lack many of the rights given to the majority in which this can be seen throughout the region;
19. *Having analyzed* the problems faced by ASEAN+3 nations, it can be concluded that the core problems are a result of the lack of people-to-people connectivity;
20. *Keeping in mind* these issues, we hereby, as future leaders of ASEAN+3 propose the following to tackle the problems confronted by minority groups.

Action Plans in Overcoming Minority Issues in ASEAN+3

A. Recommendations to identify the priorities of the minority groups

21. *Request* ASEAN+3 Member States to support the establishment of the neutral platform for NGOs, minority groups representatives, and government officials with these objectives:
 - a. To open communication channels between these stakeholders
 - b. To deepen understanding on the needs and rights of minority groups
 - c. To improve the process of policy making with regards to minority groups in individual countries
22. *Encourage* further support from ASEAN+3 Member States to second facilitators to assist with the platform of other member states;
23. *Call upon* the establishment of a regional permanent council consisting of experts in the area of minority issues to aid in the facilitation of these platforms;

B. Recommendations to address the inadequate provisions of social welfare for minority groups

24. *Support* the provision of social welfare services to the minority communities;
25. *Encourage* ASEAN+3 Leaders to establish and carry out an action plan to ensure the efficient provision of social welfare services;
26. *Highly recommend* the annual evaluation of the action plan in order to see the progress;

C. Recommendations on eliminating discrimination against minority groups through education

27. *Recommend* to improve access to ICT (Information Communication Technology) infrastructures;
 28. *Recommend* the utilization of a hybrid of mass media and social media mediums
 - a. To create opportunities for conversation on minority issues among students
 - b. To raise awareness of diversities within countries
 - c. To promote equality
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29. *Encourage* ASEAN+3 Member States to work toward a substantive equality in education for minority groups;
30. *Support* awareness campaigns with regards to minority groups within the ASEAN+3 countries by promoting educational tourism such as, not limited to;
 - a. Promote minority culture through the preservation and establishment of cultural heritage sites of minority groups
 - b. Support selling of traditional minority cultural goods
 - c. Promote the social history of minority groups
31. *Further support* education tools that promote dialogues and cultural exchange programs between schools on least addressed minority group issues;

D. Recommendations to share the responsibilities and the accountabilities in tackling the issues of minorities;

32. *Strongly encourage* all governments in ASEAN+3 to work closely with the private sectors to share the responsibilities and accountabilities through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR);
33. *Emphasize* the importance of integrating all sectors of the economy towards issues faced by minority groups;
34. *Encourage* the private sector to support minority groups by providing aid in the form of microcredit loans to support the establishment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)

E. Recommendation to improve infrastructure to enhance connectivity and accessibility for minority group.

35. *Call upon* ASEAN+3 Member States to ensure the provision of basic necessities for minority group including but not limited to:
 - a. Shelter
 - b. Food
 - c. Education
 - d. Facilities
 - e. Services
 - f. Benefits
36. *Recommend* short and long term plans in order to alleviate the discrimination of minority group and integrated them into the society.
37. *Further recommend* the creation of infrastructure that will mobilize the minority group to increase the economic, market access, resources and educational opportunities

IV. Persons With Disabilities (PWD)

Reaffirming that the development and maximizing the potential of the persons with disabilities is beneficial to the realization of an ASEAN+3 Integrated Economic Community, we hereby enumerate recognized problems and possible recommendations to tackle the issues on PWD:

Problem Statements

38. *Realizing* the need of Human Resource Development, Capacity Building and Job Employment Opportunities in regard with a single market of the ASEAN+3 Integrated Economic Community;

39. *Recognizing* the importance of the strengthening of the current institution, action and programs in order to become more effective in developing the potentials of persons with disabilities;

40. *Acknowledging* the significance of enhancing the infrastructure and communication connectivity to ensure equitable economic development for persons with disabilities;

41. *Recognizing* the need to increase awareness towards persons with disabilities in facing a more competitive economy of the ASEAN+3 Integrated Economic Community;

A. Recommendation on Human Resource Development, Capacity Building and Job Employment Opportunities

As the youth of ASEAN+3 region, we,

42. *Encourage* ASEAN+3 Member States to conduct a comprehensive survey through the micro-governments to determine the accurate condition of persons with disabilities in the different parts of the country to guide stakeholders in developing corresponding empowerment programs and policies;

43. *Recommend* collaboration between vocational training centers for persons with disabilities and employers so that the curricula are aligned with the actual demands of the labor market and improve the employability of persons with disabilities;

44. *Encourage* the ASEAN+3 Labour Ministers Meeting in enhancing and promoting quality vocational training education, labour market information, national competency standard which covers persons with disabilities;

45. *Encourage* ASEAN+3 Member States to consider community-driven educational development programs that better consider a community's resource endowments to provide persons with disabilities with specific skills that enable them to become economically productive workers;

46. *Promote* the participation of persons with disabilities in microbusinesses by:

- a. Increasing accessibility to micro financing,
- b. Encouraging the access to the domestic market

47. *Encourage* ASEAN+3 Member States to provide support services to social enterprises through public and private sectors that seek to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, including but not limited to:

- a. Management consultancy,
 - b. Marketing strategy,
 - c. Financial planning;
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48. *Encourage* business entities to prioritize marginalized groups as the beneficiaries of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects;

49. *Recommend* a more active participation of ASEAN+3 Member States' universities in addressing the issues of persons with disabilities through University Social Responsibility (USR) including but not limited to:

- a. Disabilities Studies
- b. Research Funding and Projects

B. Recommendations in strengthening current institutions, actions and programs

50. *Promote* the accountability and transparency of multi-stakeholders including ASEAN+3 Member States, investors, Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) and the beneficiaries via Social Impact Bond;

51. *Encourage* the enhancement of the role of ASEAN+3 Disabled People's Organization to act as an advocacy group to multi-stakeholders including the ASEAN+3 Member States, international development agencies, civil society organizations, media, business sectors, academic groups, Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), disabled related organizations and their parents/family organizations;

52. *Work* toward revamping the current actions and plans to maximize the performance towards the well-being of persons with disabilities and their participation in economic development;

C. Recommendations for the enhancement of infrastructure and communication connectivity

53. *Strongly suggest* the technology sharing between ASEAN+3 Member States regarding the development of barrier-free, disabled-friendly facilities by:

- a. Highly recommending Plus Three Member States (China, Japan and Republic of Korea) for the establishment of joint research and academic institutes like the research centers and higher education institutions as well as the technical expertise assistance for greater technology sharing and technology transfer in constructing, maintaining and updating the infrastructure, facilities and assistive technologies for the persons with disabilities;
- b. Encourage the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology Plus Three (COST+3) to highlight the development of regional science and technology advancement regarding to persons with disabilities;

54. *Highly recommend* the Member States of ASEAN+3 to develop a national plan in requiring public buildings and workplaces to be equipped with barrier-free, disabled-friendly facilities;

55. *Propose* a 7 years plan (time frame shall be determined based on results of phase I) of renovation and improvement of the existing buildings in providing barrier-free, disabled-friendly facilities through series of phases:

- a. Phase 1 (2 years): The drafting of a blueprint and a consensus between the members states to adhere to it,
 - b. Phase 2 (5 years): The implementation of the renovation and improvement of the existing buildings to be disabled-friendly. An independent observatory body which includes the persons with disabilities will monitor the progress of the plans annually;
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56. *Call* for a joint fund between the Member States of the ASEAN+3 for a regional implementation of improvement and development of barrier-free, disabled-friendly facilities;

D. Recommendations to increase awareness towards persons with disabilities

57. *Support* the integration of the curriculum on persons with disabilities by facilitating a platform in order to create a curriculum guideline that is implemented throughout the ASEAN +3 region by:

- a. Creating a committee consisting of ASEAN+3 teachers, experts in education, specialist in education of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities themselves,
- b. Creating educational materials that extensively discuss the issues of persons with disabilities that are suited for the curriculum suggested,
- c. Recommending the curriculum to be separated into primary and secondary steps,
- d. Calling upon the committee to have a one-year time frame to create the curriculum guideline and another one year to implement a pilot assessment;

58. *Recommend* hybrid Mass Media and Social Media mediums to empower persons with disabilities by recognizing the importance of social media in connecting and integrating persons with disabilities within the ASEAN +3 regions;

59. *Encourage* the use of social media mediums in private and public sectors to change the stigma present in society;

60. *Recommend* the creation of a joint awareness campaign in ASEAN +3 Member States by presenting issues of persons with disabilities through different mediums at prime time, in order to raise awareness, this includes print media.

V. 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.

The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN+3 cordiality and solidarity.

Adopted in Selangor, Malaysia this 23rd of

January in the year 2015

Acknowledged by:

The student participants of the

15th AUN and 4th ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers' Contest
