

JOINT STATEMENT ON PROMOTING THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA AT THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM

The 28th ASEAN Regional Forum held on 6 August 2021, via videoconference under Brunei Darussalam's 2021 ASEAN Chairmanship;

RECALLING UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2282 (2016), 2419 (2018), 2535 (2020), and 2558 (2020); the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security; **NOTING** the World Programme of Action for Youth; the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding; the UN's 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals; Colombo Declaration on Youth 2014; the August 2015 Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security; the Amman Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security; the September 2015 Global Youth Summit against Violent Extremism; the Action Agenda to Prevent Violent Extremism and Promote Peace and the UN Youth 2030 Strategy;

CONCERNED by the increasing threats to regional and international stability and prosperity as well as human rights posed by, inter alia, armed conflict, violence in armed conflict terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism (VECT), and the increasing numbers of displaced persons;

FURTHER CONCERNED that youth, particularly young women, account for many of those adversely affected by the abovementioned threats, and that the disruption of youth's access to education and economic opportunities has a dramatic impact on regional stability and prosperity, and on durable peace and reconciliation;

UNDERSTANDING that peace and security are essential in achieving stability, prosperity, as well as physical, mental, economic and social well-being, sustainable development, and creating an environment that is conducive to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

EMPHASISING the importance of preventing radicalisation to violence, and VECT among youth, as well as preventing the participation of youth in transnational organised crime, as a way to preserve stability and development, and ensure progress in peacebuilding and stabilisation efforts;

EMPHASISING the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to peaceful settlement of disputes and sustaining peace, particularly through the prevention of armed conflict, strengthening of the rule of law, and promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, sustainable development, national reconciliation and unity including through inclusive dialogue and mediation, access to justice, accountability, good governance, and gender equality while promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms;

RECOGNISING that the scale and nature of the challenge of sustaining peace calls for close strategic, innovative, and operational partnerships between the United Nations, national governments and other key stakeholders, including international, regional and sub regional organisations, international financial institutions, civil society

organisations, women's groups, youth organisations, and the private sector, taking into account local and cultural contexts, and national priorities and policies;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the important and positive contribution youth can make to efforts for the maintenance, and promotion of peace and security, and **UNDERSCORING** youth's full, effective, and meaningful participation, empowerment, engagement, and involvement in the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of conflicts, as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts, and in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation.

STRESSING the importance of investing in, and working with, youth, including those most vulnerable, to build peaceful and inclusive societies, where they can capitalise educational and economic opportunities, and develop a sense of belonging, purpose as well as direction in their lives, in order to strengthen their resilience against peace and security challenges.

CONCERNED by the increased use of new and emerging information and communication technologies and platforms by terrorists and their supporters, targeting youth for the purposes of recruitment and incitement to commit terrorist acts, as well as for the financing, planning and preparation of their activities;

REAFFIRMING the importance of strengthening cooperation at community, national, regional and international levels to prevent terrorists from exploiting information and communication technologies (ICTs) and resources to incite support for terrorist acts while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in compliance with other obligations under international law;

RECOGNISING the challenges faced by youth, including political, economic and social inequalities, which can perpetuate all forms of discrimination and violence, and that persistent inequalities put youth at particular risk, and **REAFFIRMING** the commitment towards the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promote a life of dignity for all;

NOTING the regional commitments to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda as expressed in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN (2013); the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children (2010); the ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society (2017); the ASEAN Youth Declaration on Peace and Tolerance (2018); ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019-2025); ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration (2019); Declaration on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN (2019); and the Joint Statement on Reaffirmation of Commitment to Advancing the Rights of the Child in ASEAN (2019); **BUILDING ON** the Joint Statement on Promoting The Women, Peace And Security Agenda at the ASEAN Regional Forum (2019); the ARF Statement on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (2019), and the ARF Statement on the Treatment of Children recruited by or Associated with Terrorist Groups (2020);

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

1. **CONSIDER** ways to increase inclusive representation of youth, including youth-led organisations, in the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, taking into account the views of youth, including when negotiating and implementing peace and ceasefire agreements, recognising youth as important change makers and essential partners, and inclusivity as a key to advancing national peacebuilding processes and objectives in order to ensure that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account, and that the marginalisation of youth is detrimental to building sustainable peace.
2. **RAISE** awareness on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda among policymakers as well as the general public, and encourage inter-governmental negotiations and discussions, where appropriate, with the participation of civil society, including youth-led organisations, on issues of critical importance to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in order to share policy experiences, lessons learned and best practices, and identify ways of cooperation.
3. **ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT** youth in developing and participating in international, regional, sub-regional, national and local networks to develop partnerships to build inclusive communities and promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue involving youth, including through civic engagement and volunteerism.
4. **PROMOTE** media and information literacy among youths to enhance digital and critical thinking skills and encourage effective measures, as well as initiatives that help address hate speech, disinformation, and terrorism and VECT, including online, with the involvement of youth in the planning, development and implementation stages, in conformity with relevant international and domestic laws – as part of a wider approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
5. **BUILD** the capacity and skills of young men and women, with the cooperation of relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure their full, effective and meaningful participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
6. **PROMOTE** policies for, and with the involvement of, youth that positively and meaningfully contribute to conflict prevention, peaceful settlement of disputes, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including social and economic development, supporting projects designed to grow local and sustainable economies, promoting gender equality, tolerance, respect for diversity of, inter alia, different cultures, languages, and religions, and intercultural awareness, and providing youth with opportunities for personal development, including through education and vocational training, generating employment, encouraging entrepreneurship as well as the exercise of leadership, and promoting political engagement, where appropriate.

7. **TAKE** appropriate measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of young survivors of armed conflict, including those with disabilities, and survivors of all forms of violence, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated in armed conflict situations, as well as youth affected by displacement, by providing, amongst others, access to quality healthcare and education, psychological support, socio-economic support, and skills development such as vocational training, to resume social and economic life.

8. **LEVERAGE** ASEAN-led mechanisms and entities, including the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, external partners, and other international and regional organisations as well as UN mechanisms to support the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

9. **TASK** the ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) to provide recommendations regarding the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda within relevant ARF work plans, programs and processes, including through, where relevant, inter-sessional meetings, workshops and other activities as well as engaging and collaborating with youth, including youth-led organisations, to understand their particular needs and challenges.

Adopted on the Sixth of August in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-One (2021) on the occasion of the 28th ASEAN Regional Forum

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