



**42ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
Brunei Darussalam, 23-25 August 2021**

*Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion
Towards ASEAN Community 2025*

(Res 42GA/2021/Eco/01)

**RESOLUTION ON
PROMOTING INCLUSIVE DIGITAL ASEAN TO EMPOWER MSMEs
AND STRENGTHEN THE ASEAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

Jointly Sponsored by Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia

The Forty-Second AIPA General Assembly:

Recalling the AIPA Resolution Res39GA/2018/Econ/03 on “Deepening Regional Economic Integration in ASEAN”; the AIPA Resolution Res40GA/2019/ECO/01 on “Fostering Inclusive Development in ASEAN”; the AIPA Resolution Res40GA/2019/ECO/03 on “Improving Digital Connectivity to Support the Growth of MSMEs”; and the AIPA Resolution Res41GA/2020/Eco/01 on “*The Role of Parliaments in Promoting ASEAN Cohesiveness and Economic Recovery Post Covid-19*”; adopted at the 39th, 40th and 41st AIPA General Assembly respectively, which highlights the importance of improving digital connectivity as one of the contributing factors to accelerate ASEAN Economic Integration and in particular the growth of MSMEs as well as affirming the important role played by digital technology in strengthening ASEAN’s economic connectivity and readiness to respond to challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;

Acknowledging the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnerships (RCEP), both of which aim to create a deeply integrated and highly cohesive ASEAN economy that would engender a more equitable and inclusive economic growth; support sustained high economic resilience even during global economic shocks, volatilities, and pandemic as well as to propel ASEAN towards a digitally-enabled economy that is safe, secure, sustainable and transformative, capable to further leverage and enhance the use of ICT for an innovative, inclusive and integrated ASEAN;

Remaining Mindful of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic development and integration of the ASEAN region in addition to its direct and indirect disruption of the financial market, market and supply chain including the vulnerable sectors for MSMEs; supporting the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on e-Commerce, ASEAN Framework for Personal Data Protection and ASEAN Digital Masterplan to enable the vision of ASEAN being safe and secure digital economy and digital society;

Welcoming the result of the 1st ASEAN Digital Ministers’ Meeting and Related Meetings in January 2021 that stressed the importance of accelerating inclusive digital transformation in ASEAN, which is one of the key strategies adopted under the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and its Implementation Plan, which serves as a consolidated exit strategy from the COVID-19 crisis;

Emphasizing the importance of MSMEs as the backbone of ASEAN's diverse and dynamic economy, which is currently lagged behind in digital connectivity, resources, skills and strategy of digital transformation. Hence the development of MSMEs capabilities and networking, including digital upskilling and reskilling of MSMEs to achieve significant uplift in productivity; efficiency and market expansion within the region, and other supports of MSMEs participation in the digital economy to boost economy and improve society during the post-COVID-19 as identified in the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 so that they may continue to play a pivotal role in the growth of ASEAN economy;

Further emphasizing the priority areas identified in the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework Action Plan (DIFAP) 2019-2025, which aims are to facilitate seamless trade, to protect data and privacy while supporting digital trade and innovation, to enable seamless digital payments, to broaden digital talent base, to foster and promote the policy on STEM and entrepreneurship learning in coordinating actions and to effectively implement and enable the acceleration of digital integration within ASEAN.

Hereby resolves to:

Call upon AIPA Member Parliaments to promote policies and legislation towards harmonization for ASEAN economic digital integration, which prioritize connectivity, especially sub-region and remote area connectivity, regional integration and narrow the development gap among AMS in coordination to capture the opportunities of transitioning into the Fourth Industrial Revolution in attaining and achieving integration in key sectors for overall ASEAN economic integration;

Call for the acceleration of digital integration by further enhancing the affordable, accessible digital infrastructure and regional consensus on data governance needed to support the increasing demand for digital connectivity in the region including developing domestic regulations that seeks for mobilizing and allocating adequate budget and resources supporting the objectives of the ASEAN economic integration through digital connectivity and inclusion; especially investment in education and training to upskill and reskill people to ensure that the impact of new technologies will not lead to widening the gap of development inequality;

Encourage AIPA Member Parliaments to promote digital economy and transformation as the way forward of doing business for the MSMEs to provide better opportunities and overcome the effect of economic disruptions due to COVID-19 pandemic by enhancing national efforts including on the provision of supporting governments' efforts in delivering assistance and working with business sectors to support the integrated digital connectivity in order to increase ASEAN trade and support the development of MSMEs;

Support efforts of Governments of ASEAN Member States to effectively implement the Broad Strategy 4-Accelerating Inclusive Digital transformation of ACRF and the development of the ASEAN Consolidated Fourth Industrial Revolution Strategy;

Call upon AIPA Member Parliaments to encourage the establishment of roadmaps for digitalization of MSMEs with focus on restructuring business models to optimize their performance and productivity and to improve their capacity and competitiveness, contributing to the development of digital economy in each country;

Strongly advise the exploration of potential partnerships among ASEAN Member States and AIPA Member Parliaments to promote excellence, innovation and productivity; share best practice of supporting MSMEs digital transformation and digital platforms in the region; to facilitate and enhance market access, digital financial inclusion and improve the

internationalization of MSMEs to promote entrepreneurship and human capital development towards a thriving economic environment in ASEAN;

Urge ASEAN Member States and AIPA Member Parliaments to adapt laws and regulations to protect our digital economy, including MSMEs from various cyber threats, so that an ethical environment for digitalization can be created by considering the various pitfall of digitalization such as digital dementia, data privacy, fake news and cyberattack;

Strengthen cooperation with stakeholders in the region to advocate awareness on the benefit of digital society as well as on education and digital inclusion in order to improve the ICT skills and digital literacy of people in ASEAN Member States;

Support research on Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and all forms of financial technology to enhance MSMEs performance as well as in shaping international regulations, standards, norms, values, and ethics in financial technology.

Adopted on the Twenty Fifth Day of August Two Thousand Twenty One in Brunei Darussalam at the 42nd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly held virtually.
