



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

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

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*(Res 42GA/2021/WAIPA/01)*

**RESOLUTION ON  
PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE  
FUTURE OF WORK AND POST PANDEMIC RECOVERY THROUGH  
DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

*Sponsored by Brunei Darussalam*

***The Forty-Second AIPA General Assembly:***

***Recalling*** the AIPA Resolution No. 39GA/2018/WAIPA/02 on “Empowering Women in ASEAN to Harness the Potential of Industrial Revolution 4.0”, adopted at the 39<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Singapore; AIPA Resolution No. 40GA/2019/WAIPA/01 on “Promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in ASEAN”; AIPA Resolution No. 40GA/2019/WAIPA/02 on “Bridging the Gender Gap in Technology-based Disciplines”, adopted at the 40<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand and AIPA Resolution No. 41/GA/2020/WAIPA/01 on “Promoting the Role of Women Parliamentarians in Securing Jobs and Income for Women Workers” adopted at the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly in Hanoi, Vietnam;

***Recalling further*** the ASEAN Labour Ministers' Statement on the Future of Work: Embracing Technology for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth adopted during the Special Session of ASEAN Labour Ministers on Future of Work in 2019; Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN adopted in Manila, Philippines on 13 November 2017; and the Chairman's Press Statement of ASEAN Leaders' Special Session at the 36<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit on Women's Empowerment In The Digital Age held in Viet Nam on 26 June 2020;

***Reiterating*** the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically Goal 1 on ending poverty in all its forms and ensuring equal rights to economic resources, as well as appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance; and Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls through the use of enabling technology particularly information and commercial technology;

***Reaffirming*** the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to promote quality of life, protection of human rights, and provision of equitable access to all opportunities, and other relevant international conventions and provisions for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women;

***Recognizing*** the importance of the theme of the 2021 ASEAN Chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam: “We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper”, which emphasizes the need to ensure the well-being and livelihood of the people, adapt and work together to overcome any regional and global challenges in achieving a sustainable ASEAN Community;

**Recognizing** that tackling the gender disparity in the region through women's empowerment is not only a social imperative, but also an important strategy to further ASEAN's economic growth and realizing that Industrial Revolution 4.0, which is a new era that builds and extends the impact of digitalization in new and unanticipated ways, and facilitate resiliency following the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that has greatly affected the future of work, workplace and workforce dynamics, which further amplify gender inequalities, emphasizing that the financial inclusion and digital access for women is more than an issue of gender equality and an essential part of the economic, social and political development of our countries;

**Noting** that while technological transformation offers both opportunities and challenges, and gender equality ensures women's full contribution to the betterment of societies and economies, women's participation in technology-related sectors remains low due to the inherent digital gender divide;

**Recognizing** that financial gender gaps has persisted as a result of exclusion of a large proportion of women from financial services, and recognizing that it is important to give priority to digital finance in closing these gender gaps. Parliaments play an important role in completing the legal framework for digital and financial inclusion to promote women's economic empowerment in the future of work and post-pandemic recovery;

**Acknowledging** that digitalization acts as a catalyst to the economic growth of communities, enabling the future of the world and the region and is an effective solution for women's liberation and empowerment if they have access to and are fully trained; emphasizing the strong impacts and new challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, which brings about the unemployment of the workforce, especially female workers in manual labour and production industries. At the same time, difficulties in accessing sources of support, especially in finance, is one of the obstacles for women to develop and create jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic;

**Emphasizing** that on-going challenges to unleash women's potential to harness the opportunities of Industrial Revolution 4.0 have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic thus to close the digital gender divide, parliamentarians should develop policy recommendations and digital strategies to essentially prepare women for the post-pandemic recovery; and recognizing the need to develop a framework that will accelerate inclusive and sustainable development and maximizing the potential of information communications technology (ICT) for women's economic empowerment.

**Hereby resolves to:**

**Call upon** the ASEAN Member States to implement and strengthen inclusive digital strategies that actively aim to address the gender digital divide, improving the access and affordability of digital technologies, while managing the digital security and cybersecurity; to promote AIPA Member Parliaments to build network and cooperation at bilateral, regional and international levels in training and ensuring that jobs are provided for women, and conducting an inclusive impact research of COVID-19 on ASEAN women labours to map out a post-pandemic plan of women's economic empowerment through digital and financial inclusion;

**Encourage** ASEAN Member States to increase women's participation and leadership in the policy- and decision-making process, thus strengthen and expand policies that are digitally inclusive and responsive to the challenges of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and enhances women's economic empowerment in ASEAN; and support the development of digital financial services with adequate social protection mechanisms to provide safe, secure, efficient and affordable access to women and to safeguard women's financial sustainability;

**Support** the development of women's financial sustainability by promoting implementation of the ASEAN Committee on Women's Work Plan (ACW) 2021 – 2025, which underlines seven thematic areas, including women's economic empowerment and the future of work;

**Call upon** AIPA Member Parliaments to share experiences on parliamentary interventions and practices of women's economic empowerment, and to work closely for capacity building at bilateral, regional and international levels; and recommend ASEAN Member States to develop and enhance a responsive and effective upskilling capacity, including life-long learning amidst the digital age in tandem with the increasing variability in the labour market skills demand, by proactively upgrading the existing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); and enhance greater enrolment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for women and girls;

**Recommend** ASEAN Member States to encourage, and support the digitalization of women-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and leadership, promote gender-responsive access to financing for start-up or innovation projects, as a part of sustainable effort in post pandemic recovery and the realization of digital inclusion and supporting digital enabling environment/ecosystem for women entrepreneurs;

**Encourage** ASEAN Member States and AIPA Member Parliament to enact, strengthen or amend relevant laws to address the following issues, such as cybersecurity and online safety but not limited to, lack of social protection for those in the informal economy including those in the digital platform, recognize the unpaid care work done by women, redesign financial products and services to women's needs and preferences, and, promote and underscore women's participation in designing, building and leading our digital future.

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

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