



**41ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
Viet Nam, 8-10 September 2020**

Parliamentary Diplomacy for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN

(Res 41GA/2020/Soc/03)

**RESOLUTION ON
ENHANCING AIPA'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING ASEAN SOCIO-
CULTURAL COMMUNITY IN RESPONDING TO COVID-19**

*(Incorporated from proposals by Viet Nam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and
Thailand)*

The Forty-First General Assembly:

Aware that ASEAN aims to build a people-centered and socially-responsible ASEAN Community to achieve solidarity and long-lasting unity among ASEAN Member States and their peoples by creating a common identity towards a sharing, caring, harmonious and open society where the lives, living standards, and welfare of people are improved;

Deeply sympathising with the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic that tremendously affected the ASEAN socio- cultural community, particularly the people's health, well-being, safety, social welfare, income, employment, education, and other socio-cultural fields;

Concerned with the lack of close and continuous collaboration among countries in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in preventing and combating infectious diseases and in minimizing the negative impacts on biodiversity and natural resources of socio-economic activities including the rapid increase of all types of waste especially plastic, microplastic and medical waste;

Commending the efforts of ASEAN Member States: (i) in providing timely and responsive measures to protect the lives and health of the people through their comprehensive assessment of the challenges of public health emergencies and the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) in alleviating the socio-economic impact of the global crisis by coming up with timely and responsive measures for the protection of people's lives and health, especially the efforts of the countries in controlling, attending to and treating COVID- 19 patients in particular and in providing people with the necessary healthcare services at the time of dangerous epidemics in general;

Highly appreciating the outcome of the Joint Dialogue between AIPA and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) on waste management in the context of COVID-19 pandemic to foster collaborative action among AIPA Member Parliaments and its partners to prevent and reduce waste and garbage produced from sea-based and land-based activities especially the increasing amount of medical waste during the spread of COVID-19,

and the efforts of the ASEAN Member States in alleviating the socio-economic impact, in securing essential provisions such as food and water supply, in managing climate regulation challenges, and in promoting sustainable urban ecosystems to protect the environment against the debilitating impact of COVID-19 in the region and the world;

Affirming the important role of AIPA Member Parliaments in achieving the sustainable socio-cultural development goals in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, including the prevention, surveillance and timely response to pandemic diseases such as COVID-19, and in reaffirming the commitment to the implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2025 for building a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN Community;

Recalling the AIPA resolutions on labour and employment, social welfare, education, people's healthcare, disease prevention and control, biodiversity conservation, environmental preservation, and sustainable development that urged the AIPA Member Parliaments to tackle these issues through the active exercise of their parliamentary functions and duties, promotion of initiatives, and the implementation of the Joint ASEAN Declarations adopted at the ASEAN Summits; and

Emphasising (i) the role of primary healthcare, and the importance of the availability and accessibility of vaccines, medicine, diagnostics, and medical equipment, and the people's essential participation in COVID-19 prevention and control; (ii) the importance of effective and transparent public communication, health literacy, disease information, epidemic prevention and control measures and government policies on public health; (iii) the urgency of the responsive measures in labour and employment, social welfare, education and vocational training in order to ensure the stability of society and livelihoods for the citizens, particularly the ones directly affected by the pandemic; and (iv) the need to preserve the natural resources in the region and exert efforts to restore drained resources while maintaining the ASEAN development trajectory during the pandemic.

Hereby resolves to:

Affirm the determination of AIPA Member Parliaments to support the ASEAN socio-cultural community in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic ensuring that no one is left behind during epidemic outbreaks and other public health emergencies;

Support ASEAN Member States to enhance their respective capacity to prevent and control infectious diseases; establish the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund; to emphasise the importance of risk communications and risk assessments in the early detection of and rapid response to emerging infectious disease outbreaks by strengthening the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre (ARARC); and to share information, experiences and joint efforts to carry out comprehensive, transparent and swift measures to mitigate and minimise impacts of COVID-19 as well as other future public health emergencies;

Call upon ASEAN Member States to continue and promote the implementation of universal healthcare coverage, increase the quality and effectiveness of primary healthcare, reform the healthcare system and healthcare finance, strengthen regional linkages and connectivity to broaden the accessibility of healthcare services and effective control of diseases, strengthen the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Network to respond to public health

emergencies to function as the crisis preparedness and response centre at the regional level, put forward joint measures to strengthen the capacity to make and implement strategies, programmes and regulations on sustainable development, environmental preservation and biodiversity protection;

Encourage ASEAN Member States to actively implement adopted collaborative frameworks and policies among governments and other stakeholders to coordinate and cooperate in systematically managing waste and garbage produced; to protect the environment and preserve natural resources in line with international standards, their respective national capacity, engagement with ASEAN's external partners and the international community; to develop and maintain flexible, open and connected supply chains especially relating to medical supplies including vaccines, personal protective equipment and medicines which are considered as common goods; and to take advantage of ASEAN-led regional mechanisms to bring forward policies of medical support, treatment and consular assistance in responding to pandemics to mitigate and minimize the impact of COVID-19 and other crises in the future;

Urge AIPA Member Parliaments to continue consolidating the active and responsive legal frameworks for ASEAN in (i) universal healthcare coverage to ensure that no one is left behind, especially during epidemic outbreaks; (ii) biodiversity to handle current regional losses and study ways to effectively explore biodiversity for the ASEAN people's benefit, including the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases; (iii) systematic management, treatment and disposal of waste generated during the spread of COVID-19; (iv) the use of communication and importance of raising the awareness among the public to change consumer behaviour on plastic disposal and recycling; and (v) cooperation with non-governmental organisations, civil society and the private sector in social-cultural matters to mobilise all resources responding to dangerous epidemics;

Encourage ASEAN Member States to collaborate in the field of labour and employment by: (i) promptly providing support for the livelihoods and health for all workers in response to the impact of COVID-19, especially those with low incomes and those who are in the informal economy and high-risk industries; (ii) ensuring that employees who are terminated from work or laid off are adequately provided with social safety nets and properly compensated by their employers or provided with social allowances; and (iii) affording appropriate assistance to migrant workers in the ASEAN region;

Call upon ASEAN Member States to strengthen cooperation in education and vocational and technical training by promoting life-long learning; enhance preparedness of ASEAN human resources in meeting future skill requirements, while developing new skills for workers to be able to respond to COVID- 19 as well as future pandemics; and advance cooperation with businesses in upskilling and promoting new skills for workers;

Support ASEAN Member States to strengthen cooperation for social protection, safety and welfare towards the mitigation of the impact of disasters and pandemics, including COVID-19 on the people of ASEAN, especially vulnerable groups in the fight against the COVID-19; and to provide adequate social services and protection to frontline staff, health workers, and social workers;

Call upon the AIPA Member Parliaments to enhance the capacity of parliamentary supervision mechanisms over socio- cultural policies, notably in healthcare, waste management, and environmental protection, considering them as key tools in ensuring the right direction of socio-cultural policies that contribute to a strong ASEAN socio-cultural community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Promote comprehensive and effective cooperation among AIPA Member Parliaments to overcome challenges and reinvigorate and stabilize efforts to achieve the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, economic benefits, public health benefits particularly measures to prevent infectious diseases and facilitate recovery from COVID-19 and develop a common platform to facilitate timely information sharing within ASEAN.

Adopted on the 10th day of September 2020 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.
