



**THE 44TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
5-11 AUGUST 2023
Jakarta, Indonesia**

Responsive Parliaments for a Stable and Prosperous ASEAN

(Res. 44GA/2023/YPA/01)

**RESOLUTION ON
ADVANCING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR INCLUSIVE
DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, AND
DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION**

Sponsored by Indonesia

The Forty-fourth AIPA General Assembly:

Recalling the AIPA Resolution No. Res 43GA/2022/SOC/04 on “Fostering Engagement with Young People through a Sustainable, Resilient, and Prosperous ASEAN Community” which officially transformed the Meeting of Young Parliamentarians of AIPA into a Standing Committee that is organized annually during the AIPA General Assembly;

Recognizing the commitment in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 as a guiding framework to strengthen and advance the integration process, of a people-oriented, people-centered, and rules-based ASEAN Community that is further guided by the fundamental purpose and principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter;

Recalling the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, which envisions youth development as an integral part of an inclusive community that promotes high quality of life, equitable access to opportunities for all, and promotes and protects human rights of women, children, youth, the elderly/older persons, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups;

Recalling further the commitment during the 2022 ASEAN Leaders’ Statement on the Year of ASEAN Youth to Strengthen the Role of Youth in ASEAN Community-Building adopted at the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits, to strengthen the capacity and role of ASEAN youth for addressing contemporary and contingent challenges;

Acknowledging the pivotal role of the Southeast Asia’s youth population as agents of positive transformation and acknowledging the imperative need for their empowerment within the people-oriented ASEAN Community, and the growing importance of youth entrepreneurship in the digital economy;

Emphasizing the imperative call to tackle the elevated rates of youth unemployment (11.3%) in Southeast Asia, and the prevalence of precarious employment opportunities

offering low wages to the youth workforce despite the region's strong economic growth following the pandemic, as well as promoting social security in the workforce;

Noting the urgent need to improve the representation of young parliamentarians in Southeast Asia, since the youth still face challenges in attaining equal participation in political processes, and since their full potential as democratic citizens remains untapped;

Reaffirming the crucial role of the parliament in ensuring youth involvement in promoting and defending democracy, strengthening awareness and implementation of ASEAN democratic values, including the protection of human rights in the region.

Hereby resolves to:

Call upon AIPA Member Parliaments to enact and ensure the effective implementation of legislations that support and promote youth entrepreneurship in the digital economy, to: provide a conducive environment for innovation and growth, streamline regulatory frameworks pertaining to digital entrepreneurship to reduce barriers to entry, simplify administrative procedures, and promote ease of doing business for young entrepreneurs;

Urge AIPA Member Parliaments to allocate sufficient resources to support the implementation of youth empowerment programs and initiatives in the digital economy, to collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including financial institutions, to establish dedicated funds and financing mechanisms to meet the capital requirements of young entrepreneurs in the digital sector, and to ensure a more inclusive access to loans, grants, and venture capital;

Encourage the ASEAN Member States to institute comprehensive policies and initiatives in educational institutions that enhance entrepreneurship and employability of young people, including mentorship programs in public-private partnerships scheme, support the establishment of innovation hubs and start-up ecosystems, incubation centers, networking opportunities, digital literacy, and skills development, to nurture entrepreneurial talent through the necessary corporate governance competencies, digital competencies, and foster a culture of innovation among the youth;

Encourage the ASEAN Member States to establish cross-border forums and collaborations among ASEAN Member States to facilitate knowledge exchange, market access, and trade opportunities for young digital entrepreneurs, promote innovation and business growth, and the exchange of best practices and resources in fostering regional integration and economic growth;

Advocate the AIPA Member Parliaments to increase investment to improve the quality of education, including vocational training programs that bridge the gap between education and industry needs, to enhance youth adaptability and competencies necessary for the changing economic landscapes and the future of work;

Promote the AIPA Member Parliaments to intensify parliamentary cooperation, advocate for comprehensive policies that promote quality education, tailored skills development, internship and apprenticeship programs, mobilize resources, and

facilitate knowledge-sharing among member states to support the creation of a resilient and productive youth workforce for sustainable economic development in ASEAN;

Urge AIPA Member Parliaments to work with their government to implement policies and measures that actively promote the inclusion and increase the representation of young parliamentarians, in legislative bodies, establish official mechanisms for their active participation in policy-making processes, and foster inclusive and participatory governance;

Recommend the ASEAN Member States the creation of enabling environments and spaces for the governments and youth engagements, including collaboration with the existing youth organizations, establishment of youth councils or advisory bodies, and innovative avenues for youth involvement in policy-making processes, such as online consultation platforms and other inclusive, participatory mechanisms, to foster longer-lasting trust relationships, promote the democratic participation of young people and to ensure their youth voices and perspectives are heard and considered;

Encourage AIPA Member Parliaments, in collaboration with political parties, to empower young leaders and aspiring youth candidates through mentorship and capacity-building programs, leadership development, and targeted support during election processes, and to enhance their political skills, understanding of democratic processes, and contribution to decision-making;

Urge AIPA Member Parliaments to support the development and implementation of educational programs on democratic values and human rights under the respective national constitutions and international conventions, through integration of democratic citizenship education into formal curricula and organization of awareness campaigns to foster a culture of respect for these principles among young individuals while also emphasizing the importance of instilling values of equality, including gender equality.

Adopted on the ninth day of August 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia.



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EXPLANATORY NOTE

**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ADVANCING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR
INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, AND
DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION**

Southeast Asia is home to a vibrant and dynamic youth population, constituting nearly one-third (34%) of its total population, representing the largest-ever and most significant generation of young individuals ever seen in the region. This demographic dividend presents a tremendous opportunity for driving positive change and shaping the future of the region. As they embody the potential, creativity, perspectives, and aspirations that are crucial for the region's progress, young people are at the forefront of fostering innovative approaches to governance, policymaking, and addressing complex societal challenges.

The ASEAN Community's people-oriented and people-centered approach provides a unique framework for engaging and involving youth in regional integration efforts. Recognizing the potential of young people as agents of change, the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025 places a strong emphasis on youth empowerment, aiming to provide them with the necessary tools, opportunities, and platforms to contribute to the region's development. By investing in the empowerment of young people, ASEAN recognizes their role as key drivers of political, economic, social, and cultural progress.

Young parliamentarians are expected to bridge the perspectives of the youth and the democratic process, while voicing the interests of young people on various issues that impact their generation. With a focus on these priority areas, the Young Parliamentarians of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly 2023 will collectively address the challenges and opportunities related to youth engagement for inclusive development, economic transformation, and democratic participation. It will serve as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and sharing of best practices among young parliamentarians, aiming to develop concrete actions that empower youth and amplify their voices. The key elements of the draft resolution for the Young Parliamentarians of AIPA are as follows:

i) Driving youth empowerment initiatives in digital entrepreneurship and economic transformation:

In the wake of the pandemic, the number of active internet users in our region has surged by almost 20%, surpassing a total of 400 million individuals. This remarkable

growth in our digital consumer base is indicative of the tremendous potential of the digital economy in ASEAN. Projections indicate that our region's growth rates are set to outpace the global average, with expected rates of 5.0% this year and 5.3% next year. As a result, the digital economy is forecasted to contribute a substantial USD 363 billion of Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) to the ASEAN by 2025, and that market could reach as much as \$1 trillion by 2030.¹

Despite the immense potential offered by the digital economy, there is an existing disparity in the percentage of young entrepreneurs, which stands at only 3.8% of the working-age population in Southeast Asia. The YPA aims to address this challenge by advocating for policy support that encourages and facilitates the development of young entrepreneurs in the digital space. This includes providing policy support, advocating for regulatory frameworks that promote ease of doing business, create an enabling environment for start-ups, and foster a culture of innovation.

Access to capital is another critical factor in enabling youth to start and scale their digital businesses. The YPA encourages the parliaments to work closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure that young entrepreneurs have adequate access to financing mechanisms, such as loans, grants, and venture capital, which can fuel their entrepreneurial aspirations and contribute to economic transformation. By addressing the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs and providing them with the necessary resources and opportunities, the YPA aims to promote a vibrant digital entrepreneurial ecosystem that fosters economic growth, innovation, and job creation in ASEAN.

ii) Building a resilient youth workforce for sustainable economic development:

There is an urgent need to address high youth unemployment rates (11.3%) in Southeast Asia and the prevalence of vulnerable jobs with low wages for the youth workforce despite the resilient regional economic growth after the pandemic. The YPA will encourage the parliaments of ASEAN to promote regional cooperation in enhancing the employability of young people through improved education, policies, vocational training, and skills programs. The AIPA should facilitate knowledge-sharing among member states, advocate for comprehensive policies that promote quality education and tailored skills development, encourage entrepreneurship, and support internship and apprenticeship programs. By leveraging its position as a regional platform for parliamentary cooperation, AIPA should drive policy reforms and mobilize resources to create a resilient and productive youth workforce that contributes to sustainable economic development in ASEAN.

The YPA also aims to strengthen education systems, enhance skills training programs, and promote the adaptability of young people to changing economic landscapes. This could be done through driving regional cooperation by advocating for effective policies, fostering entrepreneurship, and encouraging partnerships between educational institutions, the private sector, and government agencies. Through these efforts, the YPA aims to reduce youth unemployment rates, improve

¹ Asian Development Bank, Google, Temasek, Bain & Company (2021), "E-Conomy SEA 2021—Roaring 20s: the SEA Digital Decade."

the quality of employment opportunities, and create an enabling environment that equips young individuals with the necessary skills and competencies to adapt to changing economic landscapes, thrive in the ASEAN labour market, and promote sustainable economic growth.

iii) Engaging youth in policy-making, empowering the next generation of leaders:

The representation of young parliamentarians in Southeast Asia remains low, with only 22.10% aged 45 or under, below the global average of 31.62%.² In comparison to other regions like Europe (35.72%), Sub-Saharan Africa (36.79%), the Americas (34.44%), Middle East and North Africa (27%), and the Pacific (24.14%), it is evident that there is an urgent need for improvement. The YPA should advocate for policies and measures that actively promote and support the inclusion of young parliamentarians in Southeast Asian countries, aiming to increase their representation in legislative bodies. It is also important to promote inter-regional knowledge sharing and collaboration among young MPs to exchange best practices, strategies, and experiences in promoting youth engagement and strengthening democratic institutions.

As representatives of the people, parliamentarians also have the responsibility to advocate for inclusive and participatory governance, where the voices and perspectives of young people are heard and considered in policy-making processes. This includes raising the level of electoral participation among young people and establishing official mechanisms that enable them to practice and exercise their political skills. Moreover, supporting initiatives that foster longer-lasting trust relationships and innovative avenues for youth involvement in policy-making processes is crucial. AIPA can play a vital role by supporting efforts to increase the number and capacity of young parliamentarians, while also building young people's knowledge and trust in political institutions and democratic processes. Creating enabling environments and spaces for engagement between governments and citizens, with a specific focus on youth, is essential for regular information sharing and meaningful participation.

iv) Youth advocates for ASEAN values, democracy, and human rights protection:

Parliaments should create platforms and mechanisms that facilitate meaningful youth engagement in democratic processes. Through the enactment and enforcement of laws that safeguard democratic principles and protect human rights, parliaments should provide a legal framework for upholding these values. Parliaments can also support the development and implementation of educational programs that focus on democratic values and human rights, aiming to raise awareness and foster a culture of respect for these principles among young people. By integrating democratic citizenship education into formal curricula and organizing awareness campaigns, parliaments can equip youth with the necessary knowledge and understanding to become active advocates for democratic values and human rights.

² Inter-Parliamentary Union (2023), "Data on Age: Global and Regional Averages" in the *Parline – Global Data on National Parliaments*.

Through inclusive engagement, educational initiatives, legislative actions, and oversight functions, parliaments can empower young people to become effective advocates for democracy and human rights, contributing to the development of a democratic and human rights-respecting ASEAN community.