

# ASEAN Youth Statement

We are the youth of Southeast Asia—young persons from different organizations in eight ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam—plus South Korea). We would like to make our voices heard, as the youth of the region, the next generation who will eventually inherit it.

We met in Bangkok from 16-19 February 2009 to learn and share about ASEAN, and about issues and concerns that we face in our respective countries, the ASEAN region and as young persons. We discussed about the issues we are already working on: natural disaster management, peace-building, human rights and democracy, natural resource management and food security, and globalization and gross national happiness (GNH).

We affirm our common identity as the youth of the ASEAN, bound by a shared destiny as neighbours. We are united as young persons who are bound by a common concern for our countries, the region and the peoples. We celebrate the diversity of our roots, which are a source of our strength that serves to highlight the need for solidarity and unity as a region.

We, as youth of the ASEAN region, would like to assert that:

As ASEAN transforms itself into a more formal organization of states, it must set and lead in higher standards and mechanisms which will promote the welfare of its peoples. These standards and mechanisms need proper and full implementation so that words and ideas become reality.

ASEAN, as a regional organization, must address all forms of oppression of peoples in different countries in the region, who continue to endure curtailment of freedoms and violations of human rights different forms and degrees.

ASEAN, in order to be a true community of caring societies, must be based on a framework of human rights, sustainable development and peace-building.

ASEAN and its members must recognize and support the role and involvement of the youth in social development at the community, national and regional level.

We also commit ourselves to work together as young people in the Southeast Asian Region, and form a growing network of individuals and organizations who will engage ASEAN as young people on various issues and concerns.

Particularly, we would like to make the following specific recommendations:

### **On Environment and Natural Resource Management:**

1. We urge the ASEAN Senior officials on the Environment (ASOEN) to work transparently with civil society (NGOs, people's parties, mass organizations and independent organizations) in giving pressure on investors to practice business ethics and internalize social and environmental costs in their projects and production processes based on sound environmental and social impact assessment (EIA and SIA).
2. We propose ASOEN to set up standards for its member countries to empower local people to raise awareness, for livelihood development, alternatives and participatory natural resource management.
3. We demand governments of ASEAN countries to enforce balanced economic policies consistent with ecological and socio-cultural values, which will improve the right of local people to access and manage natural resources based on local knowledge.

### **On Human Rights and Democracy**

1. We want an ASEAN Human Rights body that is independent from member governments, in order to have a fair and unbiased investigation of violations in member countries.
2. We demand that the ASEAN Human Rights body must protect and promote the rights of youth and students (for example, the rights to organize and conduct human right campaigns, to form student governments and organizations, to freedom of political beliefs and participation, to expression, to peaceful assembly, to access to education, academic freedom, to decent work, and to human rights education, among others)
3. We urge ASEAN and its members to protect and promote all human rights, which requires greater participation of peoples in Democracy.

### **On Globalization and GNH**

- We urge ASEAN to promote and support youth participation in ASEAN policy-making, and decision-making.
  1. ASEAN must support the formation of Youth networks, exchanges and solidarity.
  2. ASEAN and its members must promote and support youth voluntarism.
- We urge ASEAN to strengthen and promote the respect and diversity of local culture.
  1. ASEAN must promote and support alternative education and local knowledge curriculum.
  2. ASEAN must support people-driven policy and increase spending for youth social services.

3. ASEAN must promote and support sustainable youth entrepreneurship.
4. ASEAN must protect and promote local product markets from the impact of globalization on food production.
5. ASEAN must protect the local youth workers from exploitation resulting from globalisation.

### **On Peace-building**

We believe that ASEAN's peace-building efforts must be based on human rights framework.

- ASEAN should promote and set up a Youth Network for peace-building and peace education (curriculum that stimulate youths to respect diversity, multiracial perspectives)
- ASEAN should promote fully the participation of ASEAN people, especially young people, to shape their future and respect their self-determination at all levels with compromise.
- ASEAN's role should control foreign intervention in terms of militarization and free trade. ASEAN should insist each country's regional to use peaceful settlement to their internal affairs.

### **On Natural Disaster Management**

In order to respond the local phenomena of natural disasters and possible impacts from ASEAN, as the peoples of ASEAN, we strongly recommend and propose the following suggestions.

- For Implementation of Socio-Cultural Community, there should be the program for Environmental awareness and education for grass-root people.
- The economic co-integration should have a standard for the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and social impact assessment (SIA)
- To empower the activities of ASEAN Senior Officials On Environment (ASOEN) Focusing on civil society rather than ministerial levels and revise the agreement on "non-interference among internal affairs of member states" which is the great block for implementing the ASEAN's mechanisms.

22 February 2009  
Bangkok, Thailand