



INTERVENTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASEAN-IPR
OPEN SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH
ASEAN SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING ON YOUTH (SOMY-XI)

Thursday, 23 September 2021

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

1. A very good afternoon to you all! It is truly a great pleasure for me to participate in this very important Meeting.
2. It is our distinct privilege to also share the work of the ASEAN-IPR which are in line with the implementation of the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2023.
3. The ASEAN-IPR's establishment, as part of the ASEAN community-building process, was a realisation of an action line in the previous ASEAN Political-Security Community – or the APSC – Blueprint, that aims to strengthen research activities on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution.
4. The Institute's founding comes from the notion of positive peace – not only based on the absence of conflict or war, but sustainable investment in development and institutions, as well as societal attitudes that cultivate peace.
5. This is therefore reflected in our motto: **Forging and Fostering Peace** – where peace building is at the very core of our work – namely in promoting culture of peace.
6. We recognise the importance of the youth's resourcefulness to strengthen the resilience of positive peace in the region. Peace building is only sustainable

if it embraces core principles of conflict prevention and the youth, acting as peace builders, can play important role in preventing conflict.

7. Certainly, with their immense energy and capabilities, as well as their ability to adapt new technology – even more so during these trying times – the youth can be prepared as mediators, community mobilisers, humanitarian workers and peace brokers.

8. Within the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025, we identify **Priority Area 5: ASEAN Awareness, Values and Identity** – as an area where our work could not only complement, but contribute in its implementation. This is even more relevant under **Programme 5.3 – building the foundations of peace among ASEAN youth in the context of advancing the ASEAN Culture of Prevention (CoP) and supporting the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (ASEAN PoA on PCRVE)**.

9. *The following are activities carried out by the ASEAN-IPR which have been oriented towards the youths as main beneficiaries.*

10. In 2018, as part of our commitment in promoting youth involvement in ASEAN community-building process, the ASEAN-IPR, spearheaded by Indonesia, held a **Regional Youth Conference on Peace and Tolerance** with the theme *“Building Unity and Common Understanding in Countering Intolerance and Violent Extremism”*.

11. The Conference produced two outcome documents – namely **ASEAN Youth Declaration on Peace and Tolerance** as well as its **Plan of Action**. These documents set about a foundation for the youth to take part and contribute in the promotion of peace and tolerance.

12. Although convened in 2018, it is pertinent for me to mention the Youth Conference, as the activity and its outcomes set forth foundation for future initiatives the Institute takes on that are oriented towards the Youth.

13. Just last month, the ASEAN-IPR held its fourth Session of our Discussion Series or Webinar – focusing on the youth’s role in peace processes. Aptly taking on the theme of “**Youths as Agents of Peace – Utilising Digital Platforms for Narratives of Peace**”, the Webinar served as platform to exchange views on the best practices of youth involvement related to peace on the digital platform; barriers to youth involvement in peace processes, as well as intergenerational collaboration.

14. Furthermore, to allow for meaningful youth participation in generating peaceful narratives, it was recognised that there needs to be an openness from the older generation to provide participatory channels for youth to be involved in peace processes.

15. In November of this year, we have another exciting project ready to be conducted: a training entitled “**Youth & Technology or Youth-Tech**”. The Training, also spearheaded by Indonesia, was inspired by one of the recommendations of the 2018 Youth Conference, “to promote narratives of peace, tolerance and pluralism through various platforms such as art, creative industry, as well as the ICT, including social media.” Its objective is therefore to strategize ICT as an instrument to enhance culture of peace in ASEAN, synergizing existing ASEAN Youth activities in building peace and understanding, serve as platform for networking amongst the youths of ASEAN, and build capacity through the use of ICT.

16. In the first half of next year, the ASEAN-IPR will be collaborating again with the United Nations to organise a **Workshop on Advancing Youth, Peace and Security in ASEAN** in the Lao PDR. Its overall objective is to advance the youth, peace & security – or YPS – agenda in ASEAN by exploring opportunities to enhance the role of youth in peace-building, peace-making and decision-making. There will be an opportunity for the youth participants to have an interface with government officials from ASEAN – in order to raise the profile of YPS at the regional level, and explore avenues to advance the agenda.

17. In addition to the ASEAN-IPR’s own initiatives, we are proud to be taking part in the activities of our friends and partner organisations that are youth-oriented. Among others, just last month, I had the pleasure to engage with the

ASEAN Youth Organisation (AYO) in their Workshop on Cybersecurity, taking on the theme “ASEAN Youth’s Resilience and Adaptability in Cyberspace”. Also last month, in the spirit of the 54th ASEAN Day celebration, the ASEAN-IPR also contributed to the ASEAN Youth Initiative Programme, taking the theme “Fostering Youth’s Initiative in ASEAN Development” – organised by the ASEAN Studies Centre of the University of Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.

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18. With the pandemic still proceeding in the region, peacebuilding efforts may be hampered by the inability to conduct physical meetings, and many other challenges.

19. Nevertheless, I am confident that the youths of ASEAN can overcome such challenges, innovate and bear the fruits of opportunity beyond and despite the challenges – as shown in today’s activity. Thus, the above-mentioned upcoming activities shall be conducted either in virtual format, or a hybrid of online-offline format.

20. The ASEAN-IPR stands ready, and look forward to collaborating with SOMY, as well as our friends and partner organisations present here today, to contribute in the implementation of the ASEAN Work Plan on Youth 2021-2025.

21. We’re humbled indeed to learn from fellow entities associated with ASEAN, as well as partner organisations on their initiatives on youth. Once again, I thank the organisers for giving the ASEAN-IPR an opportunity to share our work, and learn from others at this forum.

22. Stay safe, and I look forward to a very productive discussion.
