

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Movements > Asia (Movements) > In Asean (Movements, Asia) > **Statement: Address the missing link in ASEAN integration. Realize people's (...)**

Statement: Address the missing link in ASEAN integration. Realize people's agenda for a Social ASEAN.

Saturday 11 March 2017, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 6 March 2017).

Statement of Civil Society, Trade Unions, Migrants, and Parliamentarians in Southeast Asia

**To the 22nd Senior Officials Meeting of the ASCC
and the 17th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting**

6 March 2017

Address the missing link in ASEAN integration.
Realize people's agenda for a Social ASEAN.

On 6-9 March 2017, ASEAN Senior Officials and Ministers will tackle socio-cultural and environmental concerns in the region at the 22nd Senior Officials Meeting of the ASCC and at the 17th ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting. The latter will discuss preparations for and the declarations or statements for adoption by the Heads of States at the ASEAN Summit, with the theme "Partnering for Change, Engaging the World," in April.

We - civil society organizations, trade unions, workers, migrants, marginalized sectors, and parliamentarians in Southeast Asia - urge high officials and leaders in ASEAN to include in the discussions and declarations the perspectives of ordinary women, men, and vulnerable groups aspiring for a better quality of life - a life of dignity.

We call on the Senior Officials, Ministers, and Heads of States of ASEAN to make the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN truly meaningful by leaving a golden legacy to the peoples in Southeast Asia; make "people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN" a reality. **Adopt the people's agenda for a Social ASEAN.**

Majority of the peoples in Southeast Asia have been suffering from economic and social deprivation, insecurity, social exclusion and oppression as inequalities continue to widen. More than 65% of the workforce in the region are in precarious work - without permanent and decent jobs, access to social services and social protection, and without adequate income that could enable them a life with dignity. Less than 30% of the population have social protection as government expenditure for social protection remains low. In Southeast Asia, an average of only 3% of GDP per country goes to social protection and in 4 of the ASEAN countries it is below 2%.

While ASEAN has committed to also forming a socio-cultural community, the social dimension of integration remains sketchy. The economic integration is prioritized, for instance, over any social protection measure or benefit.

Integration efforts are taking place at a time when ASEAN member states are signing a slew of new

free trade agreements especially mega-trade pacts like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) between the ten member states of ASEAN and six states with which it has free trade agreements. RCEP would affect almost half of the world's population.

The needs and rights of the people take a back seat to markets and profits under this regional integration that pursues neoliberal interests affirmed by free trade agreements –tilted towards serving big businesses and transnational corporations, and designed to liberalize our economies including public services and weaken government authority.

People's rights and demands should stand above markets and profits. Market liberalization, deregulation and privatization have only led to the loss of traditional livelihoods and means of survival, and further exploitation of workers. They have also led to diminished public access to essential services and social security.

With the above conditions, the need to incorporate a social dimension in ASEAN's integration process is urgent. It is imperative to integrate a social dimension that guarantees people's needs and rights promoted, protected, and fulfilled in the regional integration process. We propose the notion of a Social ASEAN – where sustainable jobs, worker's rights, universal healthcare, education, water, energy, social security and affordable housing are integral components of the integration effort. This will create opportunities for all.

Adopt the agenda for a sustainable Social ASEAN that reflects the aspirations and demands of the peoples in ASEAN. To achieve a sustainable Social ASEAN, the following structural issues be addressed and factored into the decision-making processes of ASEAN governments and non-state actors. This would require existing ASEAN Declarations with a social dimension be made binding on governments and the notion of non-interference set aside in the interests of the people.

- a) Democratic and participatory processes at national and regional levels;
- b) Gender equality and protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (children and young people, older persons, persons with disability, LGBTIQ persons, migrant workers and their families);
- c) State duty to provide essential services, especially universal healthcare and lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- d) Social protection for all (universal living pension as well as health, education, housing, water, electricity, land, employment);
- e) Safe and affordable food and access to productive resources; and
- f) Ratification and implementation of ILO core labor standards.

Governments must be more inclusive, accountable, and willing to work in partnership with all their citizens towards social justice, sustainable development, and a life of dignity.

Signed,

Working Group on Social ASEAN

ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)

ASEAN Services Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC)

Migrant Forum Asia (MFA)

Network for Transformative Social Protection (NTSP) – Asia/Southeast Asia

Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)

Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN) - Malaysia

Trade Union Rights Centre (TURC)

National organizations/formations in Southeast Asia

Buhay na may Dignidad para sa Lahat (DIGNIDAD) Alliance - Philippines

WomanHealth Philippines

Kampanya para sa Makataong Pamumuhay (KAMP) - Philippines

Associated Labor Unions-TUCP - Philippines

Aksyon sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad -National Coalition - Philippines

Alyansa Agrikultura, Centro Saka, Inc. – Philippines

Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) – Philippines

Empower - Philippines

Federation of Free Workers (FFW) - Philippines

Integrated Rural Development Foundation (IRDF)

Keep Hope Alive - Philippines

Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN) - Philippines

LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights) – Philippines

Manggagawang Kababaihang Mithi ay Paglaya (MAKALAYA) – Philippines

National Movement for Food Sovereignty (NMFS) - Philippines

National Union of Building and Construction Workers (NUBCW) - Philippines

Partnership for Clean Air (PCA) Inc. - Philippines

Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) – Philippines

Philippines for Natural Farming, Inc. (PNFI)

Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW)

Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)

Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)- PSI - Philippines

Reporma Isusulong ng Survivors Kalamidad -Laguna Lakes - Philippines

Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc. - Philippines

Sustainability and Participation through Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL) - Philippines

Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau, Inc. (WLB) - Philippines

World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI) - Philippines

ZAMBAL KA - Philippines

Cambodian Grassroots Cross-Sector Network (CGCN)

CamASEAN Youth's Future (CamASEAN) - Cambodia

Cambodian Independent Civil-Servant Association (CICA)

Independent Farmers Association for Community Development (IFACD) - Cambodia

Farmers for Farmers Network (FFF) - Cambodia

Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) - Cambodia

Social Action for Change (SAC) - Cambodia

Aspek - Indonesia

FSPMI (Federation of Metal Workers)- Indonesia

Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ)

INISIATIF - Indonesia

INKRISPENA - Indonesia

Jamkes Watch (Social Security Healthcare & Workers)- Indonesia

Institut Pemberdayaan Perempuan-Institute for Women Empowerment (IWE) - Indonesia

Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI) - Indonesia

Konfederasi Serikat Nasional/National Union Confederation (KSN) - Indonesia

Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane/Sedane Labour Resource Center (LIPS) - Indonesia

Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat/Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM)

Forum Islam Progresif/Progressive Islam Forum - Indonesia

Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION) - Indonesia

Migrant Care - Indonesia

Sarekat Hijau Indonesia/Indonesian Green Union (SHI) - Indonesia

Serikat Mahasiswa Progresif Universitas Indonesia/Progressive Student Union (SEMAR UI)
-Indonesia

Serikat Pekerja Percetakan Penerbitan dan Media Informasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (SP
PPMI SPS) - Indonesia

Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity for Human Rights) - Indonesia

SPN (Nasional Trade Union) -Indonesia

Working Peoples Party (PRP) - Indonesia

Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia/ Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) - Indonesia

National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE) - Malaysia

TENAGANITA - Malaysia

Action Aid - Myanmar

Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home) - Myanmar

Yangon Watch - Myanmar

Think Centre - Singapore

HomeNet Thailand

Vietnam Peace & Development Foundation

Regional and other National Organizations in Asia

ASEAN Disability Forum (ADF)

ASEAN Youth Forum (AYF)

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

ALTSEAN-Burma

HomeNet Southeast Asia

Asian Roundtable on Social Protection

Asia Network on the Right to Social Protection (ANRSP)

Asia Monitor Resource Centre

Asia Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty (NMFS)

Building and Wood Workers International - Asia Pacific Region (BWI-AP)

Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific (DPIAP)

Focus on the Global South

HelpAge International

NGO Forum on ADB

Bangladesh Krishok Foundation

Centre for Environmental Justice/Friends of the Earth - Sri Lanka

Christian Development Alternative (CDA) - Bangladesh

Free Trade Union Development Center - Sri Lanka

Globalization Monitor - Hong Kong

Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)

Mrinal Gore Interactive Centre - India

Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee

Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR) - India

Individuals and other International networks

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World Social Forum

