

7th ASEAN Summit Declaration on HIV/AIDS

Brunei Darussalam, 5 November 2001

[1] **WE** the Heads of State and Government of the Association of South East Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as ASEAN):

[2] **RECALLING** that the ASEAN Vision 2020, adopted by the 2nd ASEAN Informal Summit held in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997, envisioned ASEAN as a concert of South East Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies;

[3] **RECALLING** the UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the 26th Special Session of the General Assembly in June 2001 that secured a global commitment to enhancing coordination and intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS in a comprehensive manner;

[4] **DEEPLY CONCERNED** that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a threat to human security and a formidable challenge to the right to life and dignity that affects all levels of society without distinction of age, gender or race and which undermines social and economic development;

[5] **RECOGNISING** that at least 1.6 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the ASEAN region, and that the number is increasing rapidly through risk behaviors exacerbated by economic, social, political, financial and legal obstacles as well as harmful attitudes and customary practices which also hamper awareness, education, prevention, care, support and treatment efforts, particularly to vulnerable groups;

[6] **REITERATING** the call of the Ha Noi Declaration adopted by the Sixth ASEAN Summit in December 1998 that we shall make sure our people are assured of adequate medical care and access to essential medicines and that cooperation shall be stepped up in the control and prevention of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS;

[7] **NOTING** the Joint Declaration for a Socially Cohesive and Caring ASEAN adopted at the 33rd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Bangkok in July 2000, to strengthen people-centered policies that will promote a positive environment for the disadvantaged, including those who are in ill health;

[8] **COMMITTED** to realizing a drug-free ASEAN, as called for by the Joint Declaration for a Drug-Free ASEAN adopted by the 33rd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in July 2000 and the Bangkok Political Declaration in pursuit of a Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 adopted by the International Congress "In Pursuit of a Drug Free ASEAN" held in October 2000;

[9] **ENCOURAGED** by the notable progress of the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS in responding to the call by the Fourth ASEAN Summit held in Singapore in February 1992, to implement regional activities on health and HIV/AIDS aimed at curbing and monitoring the spread of HIV by exchanging information on HIV/AIDS, particularly in the formulation and implementation of joint policies and programs against the deadly disease;

[10] **REALISING** that prevention is the mainstay of the response to HIV infection and that there are opportunities for the ASEAN region to prevent the wide-scale spread of HIV/AIDS by learning from the experiences of some ASEAN Member Countries, which have invested in prevention programs that have reduced HIV prevalence or maintained a low prevalence;

[11] **ACKNOWLEDGING** that prevention, treatment, care and support for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS are mutually reinforcing elements that must be integrated in a comprehensive approach to combat the epidemic;

[12] **STRESSING** that gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental elements in the reduction of the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS, and that youth are especially vulnerable to the spread of the pandemic and account for over fifty percent of new infections;

[13] **AFFIRMING** that a multisectoral response has resulted in a number of effective actions for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support and minimization of the impact of HIV/AIDS;

[14] **AWARE** that resources commensurate with the extent of the problem have to be allocated for prevention, treatment, care and support;

[15] **EMPHASISING** that the epidemic can be prevented, halted and reversed with strong leadership, political commitment, multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships at the national and regional levels;

Hereby DECLARE TO:

LEADERSHIP

[16] **LEAD AND GUIDE** the national responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a national priority to prevent the spread of HIV infection and reduce the impact of the epidemic by integrating HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support and impact mitigation priorities into the mainstream of national development planning, including poverty eradication strategies and sectoral development plans;

[17] **PROMOTE** the creation of a positive environment in confronting stigma, silence and denial; elimination of discrimination; addressing the prevention, treatment, care and support needs of those in vulnerable groups and people at risk, particularly young people and women; and strengthening the capacity of the health, education and legal systems;

[18] **INTENSIFY and STRENGTHEN** multisectoral collaboration involving all development ministries and mobilising for full and active participation a wide range of non governmental organisations, the business sector, media, community based organisations, religious leaders, families, citizens as well as people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in the planning, implementation and evaluation of national responses to HIV/AIDS including efforts to promote mutual self help;

[19] **INTENSIFY** inter-ministerial collaboration at the national and international levels to implement HIV/AIDS programmes;

[20] **SUPPORT** strongly the mobilization of technical, financial and human resources to adequately advocate for and implement national and regional programs and policies to combat HIV/AIDS, including efforts to promote mutual self-help;

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

[21] **CONTINUE** collaboration in regional activities that support national programs particularly in the area of education and life skills training for youths; effective prevention of sexual transmission of HIV; monitoring HIV, STDs and risk behaviors; treatment, care and support for people living with and affected by HIV; prevention of mother to child transmission; creating a positive environment for prevention, treatment, care and support; HIV prevention and care for drug users and strengthening regional coordination among agencies working with youths;

JOINT REGIONAL ACTIONS

[22] **STRENGTHEN** regional mechanisms and **INCREASE** and **OPTIMISE** the utilisation of resources to support joint regional actions to increase access to affordable drugs and testing re-agents; reduce the vulnerability of mobile populations to HIV infection and provide access to information, care and treatment; adopt and promote innovative inter-sectoral collaboration to effectively reduce socioeconomic vulnerability and impact, expand prevention strategies and provide care, treatment and support;

[23] **MONITOR and EVALUATE** the activities at all levels and systematically conduct periodic reviews and information sharing with the full and active participation of non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, people living with HIV/AIDS, vulnerable groups and caregivers;

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

[24] **URGE ASEAN** Dialogue Partners, the UN system organisations, donor agencies and other international organisations to support greater action and coordination, including their full participation in the development and implementation of the actions contained in this Declaration, and also to support the establishment of the Global HIV/AIDS and health fund to ensure that countries in the region would have equal opportunity to access the fund;

ASEAN WORK PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS

[25] **ADOPT** the ASEAN Work Programme on HIV/AIDS and work together towards accomplishing the regional activities in support of national programs and joint regional actions.

ADOPTED on this Fifth Day of November 2001 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.