

## Chair's Statement<sup>1</sup>

### *"Strengthening Partnership for Peace and Sustainable Development"*

1. The 8<sup>th</sup> Model ASEM was held on 15-20 November 2017, in conjunction with the 13<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM13) in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. Under the theme "*Strengthening Partnership for Peace and Sustainable Development*" more than 150 student delegates from all 51 ASEM Partner countries attended the meeting. Model ASEM is a political simulation of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) where youth participants are invited to role-play their respective ASEM Partners' positions and negotiate a consensus-based Chair's Statement. At the 8<sup>th</sup> Model ASEM participants simulated the role of ASEM Partners' Foreign Ministers at the ASEM FMM13.
2. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged that this year marks the second anniversary of the unanimous adoption of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), by which the world leaders ambitiously committed to end poverty, address inequalities and tackle climate change. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are well balanced and enable ASEM Partners to pursue sustainable development across all 3 pillars of the ASEM Process: the political, the economic, and the social, cultural & educational pillar. The Leaders noted with satisfaction that the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM12) Chair's Statement committed "*to further work in the ASEM framework on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, so as to encourage and facilitate the sharing of best practices*".
3. United in the belief in the strengths of cultural diversity and transcontinental prospects for peace and stability, the Model ASEM Leaders raised 44 areas of major concern on Asia-Europe relations and cooperation in accordance with this year's theme "*Strengthening Partnership for Peace and Sustainable Development*". These were organised across 6 thematic areas, in order to comprehensively promote the coordination of sustainable development policies across Asia and Europe.

#### **A. INNOVATION & ICT AS CATALYSTS OF ASEM CONNECTIVITY**

4. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the need to improve universal digital and physical infrastructure, including mobile connectivity. They further recommended the promotion of inter-connectivity through the facilitation of e-learning, e-governance and supporting e-commerce.
5. The Model ASEM Leaders affirmed the role of multilateral financial institutions in the development of information and communication technology.

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<sup>1</sup> As Model ASEM is a simulation-based project, the points listed in this Chair's Statement do not necessarily correspond with the positions of the organisers or the youth participants.

6. The Model ASEM Leaders welcomed the incorporation of existing relevant stakeholders into an Asia Europe Innovation Network. They expressed their commitment to continued improvement of infrastructure and connectivity. In the spirit of partnership and collaboration between Asia and Europe, the Model ASEM Leaders stressed the importance of sharing best practices on e-services, e-agriculture and e-energy platforms, and e-governance models across ASEM Partners.
7. Furthermore, the Model ASEM Leaders recognised the benefits of Blockchain technology and recommended the ASEM Partners to consider the creation of a Blockchain Advisory Board for Development. This will advise the ASEM Partners on implementing digitalisation policies, thereby providing e-services for citizens.
8. In order to increase cyber-connectivity, the Model ASEM Leaders recommended ASEM Partners to resume the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM ICT Ministerial Meeting (ASEM ICTMM1), last held in 2006 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. They suggested a focus on the general and technical aspects of intergovernmental cooperation in cybersecurity. Addressing the importance of data, the Model ASEM Leaders emphasised the necessity for further discussion on the potential abuse of data collection by private sector stakeholders.
9. The Model ASEM Leaders stressed the significance of developing widespread information and communication skills and encouraged ASEM Partners to cooperate in identifying and bridging gaps in the development of digital literacy in both formal and lifelong learning environments, especially in rural areas.
10. The Model ASEM Leaders additionally recognised the importance of digital innovation and cooperation between Asia and Europe.

## **B. EDUCATION, SKILLS TRAINING & ASEM YOUTH**

11. The Model ASEM Leaders appreciated the need to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 4 (Quality Education) in its true spirit by enhancing cooperation among ASEM Partners and promoting short-term and long-term student and academic staff exchange programmes. They urged ASEM Partners to take intermediate steps such as, but not limited to, facilitating the procurement of student visas and temporary work visas, and encouraging more funding opportunities for exchange-related programmes.
12. The Model ASEM Leaders emphasised the essential role of quality education and skills-based education, including vocational training, in view of the global advances in technology that have taken place. They further recognised the importance of harmonising education standards and negotiating the acceptability of education credentials amongst ASEM Partners.
13. The Model ASEM Leaders welcomed ASEM Partners to be more inclusive of ASEM Youth in terms of providing quality education and professional skills. Moreover, they encouraged the support of various bi-lateral and multi-lateral workshops in partnership with the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) so that ASEM Youth can fully benefit and develop the skills required to enter the employment market in ASEM Partner countries.
14. The Model ASEM Leaders proposed the interregional expansion of the ASEAN International Student Mobility (AIMS) Programme in the short or medium term with the long-term vision of aligning it with the European Erasmus+ Programme and other interregional initiatives. They encouraged academic and vocational exchanges between ASEM Partners, as well as the creation of scholarships and internships catering to academic staff, students and educators.

15. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged the role of online platforms as a long-term goal for sharing educational content across all ASEM Partners.
16. The Model ASEM Leaders emphasised the critical role of collaboration between the public and private sector and civil society in fostering quality education.
17. The Model ASEM Leaders encouraged closer collaboration towards achieving inclusivity in all spheres of education, skills training, language training and amongst the ASEM Youth despite any social, economic, cultural, religious, ethnic, and gender differences, and all disabilities.
18. The Model ASEM Leaders congratulated the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the only permanently established institution of the ASEM Process, on its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2017, and expressed their appreciation to ASEF for its long-term and sustainable work portfolio that facilitated and encouraged dialogues, exchanges and collaborations for over 25,000 individuals and organisations across ASEM during the past 2 decades. In the context of education collaboration, they commended ASEF for its added value to students, academic and university staff mobility across ASEM through its education projects in the field of education policy and youth leadership. These include the ASEF Young Leaders Summit in conjunction with ASEM Summits, Model ASEM in conjunction with ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meetings, the ASEF Summer University or the ASEF Classroom Network Conference, amongst others.
19. The Model ASEM Leaders agreed and reiterated their commitment to encourage and explore initiatives, policies, frameworks, and mechanisms that promote youth engagement and enrolment in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), including vocational training, amongst ASEM Partners. The Model ASEM Leaders also recognised the importance of collaboration between other academic fields. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that ASEM Partners should identify possible synergies in cooperation with established organisations and experts to improve research in order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through active knowledge sharing and the establishment of research projects in this area.

### **C. JOINT EFFORTS IN COMBATTING TERRORISM**

20. Model ASEM Leaders expressed concern that at least 11,000 terrorist attacks occurred in more than 100 countries last year. They strongly condemned all acts of terror and recognised that terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to peace and security. They articulated the view that terrorism should be combatted in all forms and manifestations in accordance with relevant legal norms and regulations, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Conventions and Protocols.
21. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the need for more collaboration and coordination on counter-terrorism efforts within the ASEM context and therefore recommended to re-establish the ASEM Counter-Terrorism Conference, last held in Indonesia in 2011. This will bring together high-level officials, such as counter-terrorism coordinators from ASEM countries, so as to engage in closer policy cooperation in this field.
22. The Model ASEM Leaders reaffirmed ASEM's commitment to enhancing inter-regional cooperation in counter-terrorism activities, including the dissemination of best practices, information sharing and capacity-building, counter-terrorism training, and intelligence sharing between national and regional institutions.

23. The Model ASEM Leaders recalled the commitments made to the United Nations' International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. They recognised the efforts being made by the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) and Asia-Pacific Group (APG) in setting international standards regarding anti-terrorist financing measures.
24. The Model ASEM Leaders commended the newly established FATF Training and Research Institute (TREIN Institute) for its training and capacity-building efforts in the implementation of counter-terrorist financing measures and combatting money laundering linked to terrorism.
25. The Model ASEM Leaders encouraged all ASEM Partners to join these efforts in combatting organised crime, drug-dealing, counterfeiting money, and other sources of terrorist financing.
26. The Model ASEM Leaders also agreed on the sharing of resources and technical expertise to enhance the capability of ASEM Partners to freeze the assets of individuals or legal entities suspected to fund terrorist groups, as designated by the UN Security Council Resolutions and Sanctions List.
27. Model ASEM Leaders recognised that in this increasingly globalised world and through technological advantages, movement across borders has become more commonplace. The Model ASEM Leaders commended efforts by the European Union on implementing its directive of Airline Passenger Data Disclosure within its member states. They also strongly supported the database of suspected terrorists by the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Strategic Forum, initiated by Australia and Indonesia. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged that these efforts, in accordance with relevant legal norms and regulations, can be considered examples of best practices and urged ASEM Partners to consider expanding, joining or replicating such efforts through the coordination of cross-border agencies such as Interpol.
28. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged the potential abuse of the Internet by terrorist groups for financing (especially new and alternative digital payment methods, including pre-paid instruments), recruitment, communication, and radicalisation efforts. They therefore appealed to the relevant private and public sector stakeholders to increase efforts in addressing the aforementioned issues and to take part in future ASEM Counter-Terrorism Conferences.
29. The Model ASEM Leaders stressed the need to work together to eliminate conditions conducive to the growth and spread of violent extremism and radicalisation. They commended the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) and the EU's Radicalisation Awareness Network, which promote the deepening of regional counter-terrorism cooperation, de-radicalisation, and/or the creation of rehabilitation programmes for radicalised individuals. They recognised the importance of engaging with civil society and working with youth and vulnerable groups to promote inclusivity, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and in counteracting potential radicalisation.

#### **D. CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES OF MIGRATION**

30. The Model ASEM Leaders reiterated the sentiments of the 7<sup>th</sup> Model ASEM Chair's Statement in Ulaanbaatar in 2016 relating to the importance of universal digital connectivity. Additionally, taking into consideration the increased movement of people in the context of globalisation, the Model ASEM Leaders recognised the need for information sharing on migration flows and proposed to establish an open-access platform for ASEM Partners to share and access information relevant to the trans-border movement of persons, while respecting their right to privacy.

31. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the fact that a lack of educational and employment opportunities is one of the main causes of migration, particularly for youth. As such, they urged ASEM Partners to commit to strengthening capacities in countries of origin, including, among others, through vocational, technical, educational and development training. They further encouraged ASEM Partners to commit to enhancing employment opportunities, particularly for youth, in countries of origin.
32. The Model ASEM Leaders emphasised that a clear distinction must be made between refugees and migrants, and acknowledged a shared responsibility by all ASEM Partners to manage large movements of refugees (including refugees currently located in their respective host states) and migrants in a humane, safe, respectful, fair and people-centred way with the view of promoting legal migration. The Model ASEM Leaders urged the ASEM Partners to collaborate in addressing this challenge, whilst recognising that there are varying capacities and resources to respond to these movements.
33. The Model ASEM Leaders stressed the necessity for policymakers to address the root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants, including through increased efforts aimed at early prevention of crisis situations based on appropriate preventive diplomacy and endeavouring to contribute to the provision of humane shelter for refugees
34. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the challenges posed by irregular migration to national stability and human safety, and called on the ASEM Partners to address mass movements of refugees and migrants in accordance with international law.
35. The Model ASEM Leaders called upon the ASEM Partners for more efforts and cooperation in combatting human trafficking through, among others, the increase in information sharing and the reaffirmation of their commitment to the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants joint initiative between the UN and the EU. Human trafficking in the context of refugees should also be monitored and special attention should be paid to the vulnerability of women and children.

## **E. ENDING ALL FORMS OF POVERTY**

36. The Model ASEM Leaders agreed on the need for increased economic cooperation between ASEM Partners in order to promote their sustainable growth. In order to do so, they agreed on promoting cooperation and support among countries in the Asia-Europe region sharing common problems. They also agreed on enhancing cooperation between countries from Asia and Europe and/or those with a different level of economic and social development; both measures are oriented at fostering solidarity among them and are aimed at eradicating all forms of poverty in all ASEM Partners.
37. The Model ASEM Leaders committed to fostering trade and economic relations among ASEM Partners in a sustainable and mutually beneficial manner.
38. The Model ASEM Leaders promoted the sharing of knowledge and best practices regarding sustainable economic growth within all ASEM Partners. To do so, it is a requisite that ASEM Partners evaluate the policies they have put in place thus far with respect to the first UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on Poverty Eradication.
39. The Model ASEM Leaders recommended ASEM Partners to commit to leveraging existing funds and mechanisms to promote sustainable development, allowing ASEM Partners to channel funds more efficiently in the short-term to eradicate poverty in all its forms through the promotion of grassroots initiatives and active participation of all citizens.

40. In view of respecting human rights, the Model ASEM Leaders encouraged the development of measures aiming at providing equal opportunities for vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion and poverty. Furthermore, the Model ASEM Leaders underlined the importance of bridging the economic gap between rural and urban areas, and agricultural regions and industrial ones, to leave no one and no country behind.
41. The Model ASEM Leaders recalled their commitment in the Chair's Statement at the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar in 2016 to further develop the cooperation between ASEM Partners in disaster risk reduction and management. They underlined the significance of strengthening resilience through sharing knowledge, building capacity and promoting cooperation on a broad and people-centred approach to disaster prevention and risk management. They invited all ASEM Partners to contribute actively to the implementation of the international framework for disaster risk reduction adopted at the Third UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015.
42. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged the role of ASEM as a forum for sharing best practices and knowledge in the provision of social services, in particular from those ASEM Partners who are highly developed in this area. They urged ASEM Partners to commit to the evaluation and review of national systems and policies of social services already in place, in accordance with the principles of transparency and accountability. These may be monitored by a third independent party, such as international civil society organisations, and other already existent institutions and conventions. The Model ASEM Leaders emphasised the importance of the use of technology and innovative methods such as poverty maps to ensure the determination and targeting of specific vulnerable social groups in each ASEM Partner country in order to ensure the efficient provision of social services. The Model ASEM Leaders also acknowledged the importance of promoting social protection as an essential strategy in the bid to end all forms of poverty in the long term.

## **F. RENEWABLE ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE**

43. The Model ASEM Leaders urged the international community to observe and commit to the Paris Agreement and to support each other in facilitating the sharing of expertise.
44. The Model ASEM Leaders called for the installation of sustainable infrastructure to help those nations in need of support to achieve their national commitments made within the framework of the Paris Agreement and energy security, especially through renewable and green energy resources, as well as ameliorating existing energy production and distribution systems and sustainable transportation.
45. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged that many Less Developed Countries continue to face multiple structural challenges and obstacles to renewable energy and sustainable development. The Model ASEM Leaders affirmed that sustained and effective partnerships, such as those fostered in ASEM, are essential in helping developing countries to reduce harmful emissions such as carbon emissions. It is necessary, therefore, to strengthen cooperation between all nations in the global fight against climate change, leaving no one behind.
46. The Model ASEM Leaders encouraged the practice of sustainable production, consumption, natural resource and waste management so as to conserve and protect flora and fauna, through approaches such as the circular economy.

47. The Model ASEM Leaders acknowledged that some effects of climate change are now irreversible. In accordance with this reality, they committed to helping each other wherever possible to do so and urged ASEM Partners to foster solidarity in the pursuit of climate change adaptation and mitigation. They further encouraged ASEM Partners to enhance respective local regulations to prevent climate change.

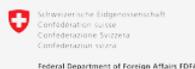
## G. CONCLUDING REMARKS

48. The Model ASEM Delegates expressed their sincere gratitude to all Model ASEM Partners, and in particular both the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) for organising this educational project and the host country Myanmar for its strong political and financial support, as well as the remarkable hospitality extended to all participants throughout their time in Yangon and Naypyidaw. The Model ASEM Delegates also thanked the Government of Switzerland for its continued political and financial support of the Model ASEM project series, and the Governments of Japan and the United Kingdom for their financial contributions to this edition. They recommended the continuation of this Forum as the official ASEM Youth side event of the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meetings and encouraged ASEM Partners to support potential spin-off activities in their own countries.

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