

JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT
16TH CONFERENCE OF THE ASEAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR
INFORMATION & 7TH CONFERENCE OF THE ASEAN PLUS THREE MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMATION

“Media: From Information to Knowledge for a Resilient and Responsive ASEAN”

22 – 23 September 2023, Danang, Viet Nam

1. The 16th Conference of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) and the 7th Conference of the AMRI Plus Three were hosted by Viet Nam in Da Nang, Viet Nam, on 22 – 23 September 2023.
2. The theme of the 16th AMRI was “Media: From Information to Knowledge for a Resilient and Responsive ASEAN”.
3. The Meeting was preceded by the 20th Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI) and its meeting with the Plus Three Countries and Japan on 20 – 21 September 2023.

Opening Session

4. The ASEAN Anthem “The ASEAN Way” was played during the Opening Session. The Opening Session commenced with the Keynote Address by H.E. Ms. Vo Thi Anh Xuan, Vice President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; and Remarks by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Van Quang, Secretary of Da Nang Municipal Party Committee, H.E. Mr. Ekkaphab Phanthavong, Deputy Secretary - General of ASEAN, and H.E. Mr. Nguyen Manh Hung, Minister of Information and Communications of Viet Nam, who expressed it was an honour for Viet Nam to host the 16th AMRI and Related Meetings.
5. The Meeting was Chaired by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Manh Hung, Minister of Information and Communications of Viet Nam, with H.E. Mr. Pehin Dato Halbi, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Minister of Defence II of Brunei Darussalam as Vice Chair. The Meeting was attended by all ASEAN Member States, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.
6. H.E. Mr. Nguyen Manh Hung, Minister of Information and Communications, Viet Nam, reiterated the important role of the media and information sector in supporting the ASEAN community to become resilient and responsive to challenges and opportunities arising from digital transformation. His full remarks appear in **ANNEX 1**.

Pivoting from Information to Knowledge for a Resilient and Responsive ASEAN

7. The Meeting noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about rapid and irreversible digital transformation and innovation that have disrupted the ASEAN people’s ways of lives including on how they communicate and consume information. The Meeting recognised the growing influence of new and social media as a means for greater interactions and source of information that may have the potential to cause

public concerns and drive discussions on social issues. The Meeting further recognised that advanced technology and artificial intelligence have created and shaped digital contents in unprecedented ways. These changes have brought about opportunities in innovative storytelling and at the same time challenges such as the proliferation of fake news and disinformation, as well as cyber threats due to the exploitation of digital technology by criminals.

8. In response to the fast-changing information landscape, the Meeting urged the media and information sector to be more resilient and responsive becoming an active medium for inclusive lifelong learning and for promoting digital awareness and literacy for ASEAN citizens. The Meeting underscored the importance of disseminating timely, accurate, evidence-based and credible information to better inform the society and empower individuals, communities, and societies, and called for the deepening of regional cooperation to support the development of a conducive online environment through fostering excellence in information and media literacy, as well as providing effective public and strategic communications for citizens.

9. In order to achieve a more knowledgeable, resilient and responsive ASEAN, the Meeting noted on the continuing efforts to build capacity and train media professionals as well as promote digital literacy for the public and agreed to further leverage the digital pivot through the use of big data, analytic tools and behavioural and data science to create meaningful contents so as to better reach out to wider populations and younger citizens. With the power to mobilise public sentiments and public opinions, the media carries a great social and moral responsibility to foster and promote trust and reliability.

10. The Meeting further noted that digital transformation has disrupted the media industry, especially its business model such as radio and print journalism which need to better adapt so as to meet the demands of diverse audiences. Broadcast journalism has been challenged by the advent of streaming platforms and social media influencers who have become alternative sources of news and information. The Meeting acknowledged that this shift in information consumption can bring opportunities for media to innovate and further cooperate with those involved in the creator economy. To this end, the Meeting encouraged greater dialogue and engagement among the media, community, and citizenry so as to promote greater information inclusiveness, especially in amplifying reliable sources of information and developing digital skills among ASEAN citizens especially youth and elderly citizens.

AMRI Vision Statement “ASEAN 2035: Toward a Transformative, Responsive, and Resilient Information and Media Sector”

11. The Meeting supported the AMRI Vision Statement on “ASEAN 2035: Toward a Transformative, Responsive, and Resilient Information and Media Sector,” and underscored the transversal role of and contribution by the ASEAN Information sector toward achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and in supporting the implementation of the respective Blueprints of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, ASEAN Political-Security Community and ASEAN Economic Community, and its successor document amidst challenges and opportunities arising from rapid digital transformation and convergence beyond 2025. The Meeting underscored the

transformative role of media to empower individuals, communities, societies, and to drive passive information consumption toward active knowledge acquisition.

12. To support the Vision Statement, the Meeting called for cooperation with all relevant stakeholders including ASEAN Dialogue Partners, academic institutions, and private sectors to promote the social responsibility of cross border digital media platforms in a whole-of-ASEAN approach that leverage innovation and digital transformation, including, but not limited to, capacity building for media professionals, digital literacy and lifelong learning, sharing of accurate information, combatting fake news, research and studies. The Meeting also encouraged AMS to consider the development of a Master Plan on Digital Transformation for Press and Media.

Da Nang Declaration on "Media: From Information to Knowledge for a Resilient and Responsive ASEAN"

13. The Meeting supported the Da Nang Declaration on "Media: From Information to Knowledge for a Resilient and Responsive ASEAN" which recognises the pivotal role of media in contributing to the goal of a knowledge-empowered citizenry, promoting knowledge acquisition as the impetus to foster a resilient and responsive ASEAN Community, and fostering ASEAN Identity to promote social cohesion and deepening a sense of regional belonging in response to the changing media landscape due to digital transformation.

14. The Meeting called for greater collaboration and synergy across ASEAN Community Pillars and with external stakeholders to strengthen the resilience and responsiveness of societies, promotes excellence in different forms of literacy, fosters inclusive media ecosystem, empowers ASEAN citizenry on active knowledge acquisition especially among the youth, and promotes information inclusiveness and accessibility with the goal of creating and building a digitally enabling media environment in ASEAN.

Plan of Action of the ASEAN Task Force on Fake News (PoA of TFFN)

15. The Meeting recalled the establishment of the ASEAN Task Force on Fake News (TFFN) in 2019, and supported the Plan of Action of the ASEAN Task Force on Fake News (TFFN PoA) that has been developed. The Meeting applauded the continued efforts of the information sector in institutionalising a regional mechanism to address the proliferation of asymmetric threats including fake news, misinformation, hate speech, extremist views and radicalisation. With the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the TFFN adopted by SOMRI in February 2022, two meetings of the TFFN have since been held in October 2022 and July 2023 respectively.

16. The Meeting urged the TFFN to keep abreast with digital developments that could exacerbate online abuses and create divisions in societies by strengthening the promotion of cyber wellness and literacy, and improving the efficiency in detection and response. To this end, the Meeting underscored the need to better develop and adopt evidence-based research and approaches that could enhance policymaking in dealing with the deleterious impact of these cyber threats.

17. Moving forward, the Meeting welcomed the involvement of key stakeholders including ASEAN Dialogue Partners, the private sector, as well as the public in supporting the TFFN in combatting fake news and misinformation and promoting excellence in media and information literacy in ASEAN.

Guideline on Management of Government Information in Combatting Fake News and Disinformation in the Media

18. The Meeting endorsed the *Guideline on Management of Government Information in Combatting Fake News and Disinformation in the Media* that sought to provide a framework on how governments can respond to false or misleading information that is being disseminated in the media or on social media platforms; to establish standards and good practices for government information officers; to promote accuracy and reliability, improving transparency and accountability in government communications; to improve coordination and collaboration between government agencies especially during times of crisis or emergency; and to ensure that government communications are transparent and accountable.

19. The Meeting thanked Indonesia for initiating the development of the *Guideline on Management of Government Information in Combatting Fake News and Disinformation in the Media* and further commended ongoing efforts towards strengthening the management of government information to counter disinformation and fake news.

ASEAN Strategic Plan for Media and Information (2016-2025) and Development of New Work Plan

20. The Meeting welcomed the good substantive progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Information and Media (2016-2025). The Meeting noted that the monitoring and evaluation of the work plan's implementation is further enhanced by the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the Information Sector that have been put in place. The Meeting looked forward to support the review of the existing work plan, and the envisioning exercise to develop a forward-looking new Work Plan that could further contribute to realising the role of media in fostering a resilient and responsive ASEAN, that is in line with the Vision Statement.

Updates from the SOMRI Working Groups

21. The Meeting commended the work of the three SOMRI Working Groups (WGs), namely, the Working Group on ASEAN Digital Broadcasting (WG-ADB), the Working Group on Content and Production (WG-CP) and the Working Group on Information, Media and Training (WG-IMT). The three WGs have accelerated the progress in the development of digital broadcasting and contributed to the production of high-quality content, supported capacity-building for media personnel, as well as promoted media and information literacy.

22. As ASEAN moves toward ASEAN-post 2025 vision, the Meeting underlined the importance of the three WGs to continue assessing the changing digital and media landscape to ensure digital and information equity and inclusiveness for all, and to continue to promote a safe and secure cyber space for all ASEAN citizens especially for the vulnerable segments of society including elderly citizens, youth, children, and persons with disabilities.

ASEAN Communication Master Plan 2018-2025 (ACMP II) in Promoting A Community of Opportunities for All

23. The Meeting noted the steadfast implementation of the ASEAN Communication Master Plan (ACMP) II 2018-2025, and noted the initiatives under the information sector to amplify ASEAN awareness and foster ASEAN identity, in line with the ACMP II and its guiding message houses.

24. The Meeting welcomed further collaboration with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and external stakeholders in developing effective and innovative communication that could further enhance greater understanding and mutual appreciation among ASEAN citizens on the benefits of our regional integration, and to promote the key ACMP II message, “ASEAN: A Community of Opportunities for All”.

ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI)

25. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) for initiating projects that focused on improving the capacity of media and information sector. Specifically, the Meeting commended on convening of the *ASEAN Forum on Tackling Disinformation*, and the *ASEAN Workshop on Best Practices of Digital Transformation in Media* among others. The Meeting also appreciated the submission of new initiatives including the *ASEAN Forum on Raising Media and Information Literacy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, the *ASEAN Symposium on Enhancing Public Access to Information*, and the *Workshop on Mastering Government Communication: Empowering Spokespersons for Effective Public Engagement*.

26. In amplifying ASEAN awareness and fostering ASEAN Identity, the Meeting noted the implementation of activities such as the *Symposium on ASEAN Identity*, *Promotion of ASEAN Value and Identity in All AMS*, *Tour of ASEAN Journalists to Observe SEA Games in Cambodia*, and the *ASEAN Quiz*. The Meeting commended the plan to review and extend the implementation of *ASEAN Quiz* which is a longstanding initiative following 20 years of implementation.

27. Cognisant of the role of information and media sector in providing cross-cutting support to ASEAN’s efforts in dealing with issues pertaining to human, social and sustainable developments, the meeting commended the implementation of initiatives that addressed socio-economic issues including the *ASEAN Creative Film in Response to COVID-19*, *RISE ASEAN (Right Information Saves and Empowers ASEAN): Short Video Contest on Countering the Infodemic*, *ASEAN Information Exchange Initiative (ASEAN Exchange 2022)*, and *Documentary Production on the*

Theme: Encouraging Sustainable MSMEs in Media and Entertainment Industry, and looked forward to new initiatives such as Enhancing Reporting Skills for Journalists in ASEAN Region on Child Safety Online; ASPIRING (ASEAN Short Sports Regional Documentaries), A Journey of ASEAN Flavour and Vivid ASEAN (a radio documentary programme production on national attractions). The Meeting encouraged the sector to develop more initiatives that addressed cross-sectoral issues such as health, environment and climate change, food security, disaster management, economic and tourism, women, and youth.

Cooperation with Dialogue Partners

28. The Meeting exchanged views on the progress of ASEAN cooperation with the Plus Three Countries in the field of information and media. The Meeting welcomed the extension of the Work Plan on Enhancing ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Through Information and Media to 2025. In this regard, the Meeting encouraged ASEAN and the Dialogue Partners (China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) to enhance cooperation especially on capacity building for media professionals or sharing of expertise and technical knowledge in utilising digital technology in media production that could level up the skills and expertise so as to better seize the opportunities arising from digital transformation.

29. The ASEAN Member States expressed their appreciation for China's efforts to strengthen the ASEAN-China cooperation and supported the extension of the ASEAN-China Work Plan on Enhancing ASEAN-China Cooperation through Information and Media to 2025. The Meeting encouraged new initiatives to further strengthen the cooperation between ASEAN and China.

30. The ASEAN Member States looked forward to Japan's support to the review of the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Media and Information (2016-2025) and the development of the new Work Plan for ASEAN's media and information sector.

31. The ASEAN Member States expressed appreciation for the initiatives by the Republic of Korea to further advance cooperation with ASEAN in the information and media sector. The Meeting welcomed ROK's initiatives to further strengthen cooperation with ASEAN by sharing experiences of disinformation response and AI technologies in the media sector.

Closing and Acknowledgement

32. The Meeting agreed to convene the 17th AMRI and its Related Meetings in Brunei Darussalam in 2025.

33. The Meeting expressed their deep appreciation to the Government of Viet Nam for the excellent arrangements made for the convening of the 16th AMRI, 20th SOMRI and Related Meetings. The Meetings were held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN solidarity and cordiality.