

Joint Statement of ASEAN-UNESCO Committee
to be delivered at 201st Session of the Executive Board
April 2017, UNESCO Headquarters

Mr. President, Madame Director-General,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
2. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN. Our vision is that of a people-centered ASEAN community living in peace, progress and social harmony. Human resources development, education, science and technology are at the very top of ASEAN's agenda.
3. We, therefore, attach much importance to strong engagement with UNESCO. Today, ASEAN host two UNESCO Regional Offices in our Indonesia and Thailand, as well as several Category 2 Institutes and Centres in other ASEAN states. Furthermore, we also signed the UNESCO-ASEAN Framework Cooperation Agreement which covers all the areas within the core mandates of UNESCO.
4. High on ASEAN's agenda is the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We have high hopes that the 39 C/5 and the reforms will set clear priorities as well as strengthen UNESCO itself to advance the SDGs. On our part, the SEAMEO or Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization has been nominated as ASPAC's regional organization representative to the SDG 4 steering committee, thus, reiterating ASEAN's commitment to the attainment of Agenda 2030. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind the different capacities, specific national priorities, needs and limitations. There is no one size fits all strategy and thus ownership at the national level is of utmost important factor.
5. I would like to conclude by sharing ASEAN's views regarding the evaluation of the Intersessional Meetings of the UNESCO Executive Board. The Evaluations, being so crucial, should be conducted through discussions and debated among Member States and not simply through the distribution of a questionnaire. It must also consider the mandate and recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance. As the first step, we suggest that Member States agree on principles and objectives that can guide the work of any future intersessional mechanism, so that we see our way clearer to the way forward.

Thank you.