ASEAN DECLARATION ON INNOVATION

WE, the Heads of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as "ASEAN"), namely Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 31st ASEAN Summit in the Philippines:

REAFFIRMING the importance of cooperation among ASEAN Member States(AMS) towards the formation of an ASEAN Community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible, as well as the development of human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in the creation of science, technology and innovation (STI) policies for people's empowerment, inclusive growth, and strengthening of the ASEAN Community;

RECOGNISING the importance of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to foster sustainable economic growth, job creation, and enhanced well-being and science and innovation systems, to spur creativity and innovation that will serve as a foundation in driving the growth and competitiveness of industries in the region;

COGNIZANT of the need for effective policies and laws that support a competitive, innovative and dynamic ASEAN;

ACKNOWLEDGING the principles adopted in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 that provides broad directions through strategic measures for the AEC including the emphasis of STI as a driving force in the regional economic integration agenda;

WELCOMING the progress made in advancing STI under the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025;

MINDFUL of the changes in the ASEAN community as it becomes increasingly STI-enabled and therefore more innovative, competitive, vibrant, sustainable, and economically- integrated;

DECLARE that our states need policies that promote excellence and relevance in public research and encourage stronger links among government, academia, industry and society in order to strengthen the impact of STI, such as to:

1. Recognize the opportunities and benefits arising from innovative start-ups and disruptive technologies that enable transformation across sectors of society, thus requiring holistic policies that foster entrepreneurship and new business, facilitate movement of capital and talent and harness market scalability in the ASEAN region;

2. Promote and reward innovative firms and businesses that generate employment opportunities by carrying out collaboration, capital investment, and cross-border transactions through digital technologies;

3. Stimulate innovation literacy as well as the continuous development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Information Communication Technology (ICT) generic, specialist and complementary skills, to equip the workforce with the skills and competencies for innovation through education and training policies attuned to the demands of our advancing economies;

4. Enhance the policy and regulatory environment for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), which promotes intra- and inter- governmental cooperation and coordination mechanisms; involve MSMEs in the policy-making consultation process to enable better representation of their interests; provide support to micro enterprises in the informal sector and their integration; and streamline processes to set up business, to enable less costly and faster business formation, as well as processes and regulations that might limit firm growth or the exit of firms;

5. Foster a hospitable and dynamic intra-ASEAN policy environment for innovative research and technology transfer; and broaden supportive fiscal and non-fiscal policies for innovative R&D in both local and foreign owned firms in the region;

6. Harness STI to facilitate the realisation of UN's Sustainable Development Goals by promoting further use of STI to address global challenges and societal concerns such as food security,

health, energy, water, transport, environment, and disaster-related problems, so as to improve the well-being of the ASEAN people in the urban and rural communities;

7. Encourage establishment of regional networks of joint research, capacity-building and innovation initiatives that focus on topics relevant to ASEAN, and enhance STI collaboration with global partners through such network organizations;

8. Promote the use of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) system that facilitates research collaboration, technology commercialization and an innovation culture.

TASK the Ministers to continue the efforts for the future implementation of STI policies and encourage an exchange of good policy practices;

DIRECT all relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies to implement and review, as appropriate, the understanding that we have achieved in this Declaration so as to maintain its relevance to future challenges and opportunities confronting our economies and societies;

ENCOURAGE the relevant ASEAN bodies to promote and implement relevant policies and laws that support a pro-innovation, business and regulatory environment.

ADOPTED in Manila, Philippines on the day of Thirteenth of November in the Year Two Thousand Seventeen.