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ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children

WE, the Heads of States/Governments of Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, members of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations, hereinafter referred to as ASEAN,

REAFFIRMING the Ha Noi Declaration of 1998 and the Ha Noi Plan of Action, which, among others, committed to intensify individual and collective efforts to address transnational crimes, including the trafficking in persons;

EXPRESSING the urgent need for a comprehensive regional approach to prevent and to combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and children;

ACKNOWLEDGING that social, economic and other factors that cause people to migrate also make them vulnerable to trafficking in persons;

RECOGNIZING that the immorality and inhumanity of this common concern elicits the need to strengthen legislative, law enforcement and judicial responses to ensure deterrent action is taken against persons involved in individual or syndicated activities of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children;

APPRECIATING that a successful campaign against the scourge of trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, requires continuing dialogue, exchange of information and cooperation among ASEAN;

REAFFIRMING ASEAN's unwavering desire to embrace the spirit behind the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its relevant protocols as it reflects the commitment of the Member States of the United Nations to prevent and combat transnational

organized crime;

REAFFIRMING through this Declaration a commitment to human development and security, and the improvement of the quality of life of the peoples of ASEAN;

HEREBY DECLARE, to the extent permitted by their respective domestic laws and policies, to undertake concerted efforts to effectively address an emerging regional problem, namely the trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, through the following measures:

1. To establish a regional focal network to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, in the ASEAN region;
2. To adopt measures to protect the integrity of their respective passports, official travel documents, identity and other official travel documents from fraud;
3. To undertake regular exchange of views, information sharing on relevant migratory flows, trends and pattern, strengthening of border controls and monitoring mechanisms, and the enactment of applicable and necessary legislations;
4. To intensify cooperation among our respective immigration and other laws enforcement authorities;
5. To distinguish victims of trafficking in persons from the perpetrators, and identify the countries of origin and nationalities of such victims and thereafter ensure that such victims are treated humanely and provided with such essential medical and other forms of assistance deemed appropriate by the respective receiving/ recipient country, including prompt repatriation to their respective countries of origin;
6. To undertake actions to respect and safeguard the dignity and human rights of genuine victims of trafficking in persons;
7. To undertake coercive actions/measures against individual and/or syndicate engaged in trafficking in persons and shall offer one another the widest possible assistance to punish such activities; and
8. To take measures to strengthen regional and international cooperation to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

All Member Countries reaffirm their commitment to accomplish the elements of this Declaration through maximum efforts by such appropriate instruments as may be necessary and consistent with their respective national laws and policies.

ADOPTED by the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN Member Countries on this Twenty-ninth Day of November 2004 in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

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