



Joint Statement on the ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment and ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development

KUALA LUMPUR (20 NOVEMBER 2025) - The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and the Malaysian Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and current AICHR Chair, H. E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, jointly welcome the adoption of two historic instruments at the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, namely the ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment and ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development.

These declarations reflect milestone commitments by ASEAN Member States to address pressing regional challenges, from environmental degradation and climate change to inequality and unsustainable development through a human rights-based lens and approach.

We emphasise the critical importance of both substantive and procedural elements of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment: safe climate, clean air, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, safe and sufficient water, healthy and sustainable food, non-toxic environment, meaningful access to information, effective public participation, and access to remedies and justice. They are essential pillars towards realising the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Further, the human right to development demands that all facets of the right – economic, social, cultural and political – are protected and enhanced together in an integrated fashion. We further underscore the uniqueness of the Declarations which call for greater corporate responsibility and accountability, ensuring that non-State actors and businesses prevent, cease, reduce, mitigate, and address negative impacts and harm to the environment.

We stress that environmental degradation threatens not only ecosystems but also human health, peoples' welfare and security, and social stability. For this reason, States must strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks to fully operationalise the rights in the Declarations while aligning domestic policies with the regional commitments enshrined in the Declarations.

SUHAKAM has consistently advocated for including the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment under Article 5(1) of the Federal Constitution. SUHAKAM further recommends that the upcoming National Climate Change Bill (RUUPIN) fully incorporates the key elements and principles of the Declarations.



To move these commitments forward, SUHAKAM and AICHR Malaysia strongly encourage all ASEAN Member States to:

- i. Institutionalise the key elements and principles of the Declarations into national legal frameworks, including through constitutional recognition and law reform.
- ii. Ensure that future climate and environmental legislation, such as the RUUPIN, adopt a rights-based approach grounded in access to remedies and justice, transparency, participation, and accountability.
- iii. Strengthen institutional capacity and mechanisms to guarantee meaningful access to information, effective public participation, and access to remedies and justice particularly in environmental and development matters emphasising greater protection for groups in vulnerable and marginalised situations such as Indigenous Peoples and environmental human rights defenders.
- iv. Establish clear obligations for State and non-State actors, including businesses, to prevent, cease, reduce, mitigate, and address negative impacts and harm to the environment.
- v. Develop regional cross-sectoral and cross pillar cooperation to operationalise the Declarations in a participatory and inclusive manner, involving government agencies in charge of the environment, climate change and development matters, civil society, environmental human rights defenders, and affected local communities.
- vi. Monitor and report progress on the realisation of the Declarations transparently and regularly, using publicly accessible mechanisms.
- vii. Demonstrate strong political commitment at the highest levels to uphold the Declarations as instruments that shape policy, planning, and governance across ASEAN.

The adoption of these two ASEAN Declarations is a momentous achievement that offers genuine hope for a future in which human rights, environmental sustainability, development, and peace are mutually reinforcing.

As the incoming Chair of the South East Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF), SUHAKAM reaffirms its strong commitment to supporting regional human rights cooperation. In this capacity, both SUHAKAM and SEANF will work closely in support of AICHR's work, promoting coordinated advocacy, capacity-building, and implementation efforts among SEANF member institutions to advance the principles of the two Declarations across Southeast Asia.

SUHAKAM and AICHR Malaysia stand ready to work in close partnership with governments, civil society, regional bodies, and communities to ensure that these Declarations are not merely symbolic, but are translated into meaningful, binding, bold and enforceable action. We urge all ASEAN Member States to honour their commitments and turn them into lived realities for the ASEAN peoples.

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Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR Malaysia)

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