



SDG LOCALIZATION IN ASEAN: EXPERIENCES IN SHAPING POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

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FOREWORDS

ASEAN

ASEAN cooperation over the past fifty years has enabled the region to benefit from continued peace, stability and security. This, in turn, has provided for rapid economic growth and social development. Investments in social development have produced tangible results, such as an educated workforce and increased life expectancy.

In implementing development policies, ASEAN has embraced and upheld the principles of sustainability. High-level meetings, such as the annual High-Level ASEAN Brainstorming Dialogue on Sustainable Development and the Special Session of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting focusing on Sustainable Development, have guided ASEAN efforts in developing a regional consensus in policy action, roadmaps and synergies towards sustainable development.

ASEAN recognizes that realizing the ASEAN Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) requires the involvement of people and local governments. These goals need to be translated into policies at the local level, which are relevant and applicable to the communities being served. This joint report on "SDG Localization in ASEAN: Experiences in Shaping Policy and Implementation Pathways" is a welcome initiative to better understand how policies can be localized to engage citizens.

This report is an outcome of the ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium on Localising the SDGs and Realising Poverty Eradication, held 20–21 August 2018 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The report recognizes ASEAN's development context and highlights the importance in engaging and equipping local governments and community actors with sufficient capacity to become agents of change. The report also elaborates on the way forward to mainstream the SDGs at the regional and subnational levels. It provides a framework for "localizing" the implementation of the SDGs through empowering local governments and involving them from planning to monitoring implementation of the SDGs.

This collaboration between ASEAN, UNDP and China in "leaving no one behind" is a model of ASEAN's advanced partnerships, both within and beyond the ASEAN region. It has brought about a pool of knowledge that is beneficial not only to our region, but also to other regions and partners, in pursuit of sustainable development.



H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi
Secretary-General of ASEAN

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN Development Summit in September 2015, outlined a blueprint for global development and international cooperation on development. Over the years, China has incorporated the implementation of the 2030 Agenda into domestic development as well as international and regional cooperation programmes.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global cooperation initiative aimed at shared benefits and common prosperity, is highly consistent with the 2030 Agenda and has become an important channel to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. As Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out at the Opening Ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, in the joint pursuit of the BRI, we must always take a development-oriented approach and see that the vision of sustainable development underpins project selection, implementation and management. We need to strengthen international development cooperation so as to create more opportunities for developing countries, help them eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

China has been a strong supporter to ASEAN and its member states on a path towards sustainable development through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Our cooperation spans a wide range of areas, including poverty reduction, energy, environment protection, regional integration, climate change and disaster management. It has become a new growth point of ASEAN-China cooperation.

Among these efforts, the symposium on SDG jointly held by the Chinese Mission to ASEAN, UNDP and the ASEAN Secretariat for three consecutive years has gained increasing recognition and support from the region. It has become a useful platform to bring officials, experts and scholars to brainstorm, share experiences and best practices, and discuss ways to further implement SDG goals. We are glad to see that efforts do not stop there. Relevant parties have already taken actions to explore concrete cooperation projects on the ground.

As one of the outcomes of the third symposium, this joint report on “SDG Localization in the ASEAN: Experiences in Shaping Policy and Implementation Pathways” has made constructive exploration on SDG localization based on different case studies in China and ASEAN member states. We are confident that it will provide inspiration for countries in the region towards better implementation of the 2030 Agenda. With the recent successful conclusion of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, we also believe this report will contribute to the building of a green and high-quality belt and road to the shared interest of the region and beyond.

As an immediate neighbour and close partner of ASEAN, China is committed to further strengthening SDG cooperation with ASEAN and the UNDP to achieve the sustainable development of ASEAN as a whole and take the ASEAN-China strategic partnership to new heights.



Huang Xilian

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
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UNDP

With little over a decade to go to transform the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda into reality for the “dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet”, the UN Secretary General calls for a sense of urgency for countries to take “immediate and accelerated actions,” along with collaborative partnerships among governments and stakeholders at all levels.

This call for urgency also applies to the ASEAN context. While ASEAN member states have made remarkable progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), persistent development challenges remain. Growing inequality, increasing employment insecurity, environmental degradation and increasing disaster risks could undermine the gains that have been made over the past decades and can push more people into poverty.

The 2030 Agenda is clear that tackling complex development challenges will require collaboration and sustained effort from all levels of governments and various stakeholders. Specifically, subnational and local governments have a larger role to play in localizing the global goals and in developing and implementing integrated approaches to achieve the goals.

Towards this end, countries need to focus on “enablers” to ensure that efforts at different levels of governments contribute to a more coordinated and coherent policy and action at the local level. Lessons from achieving the MDGs offer valuable insights in how governments at all levels can increase their efficiency and effectiveness, develop evidence-based policies and strategies, engage and collaborate with different stakeholders, collate resources from different sources and be held accountable for achieving sustainable development.

ASEAN and its member states, the Government of the People’s Republic of China and UNDP have been working together to realize the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and for all ASEAN countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One such collaboration is the Annual Joint Symposium, funded by the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund, to discuss, share experiences, and facilitate cooperation among member states, China and UNDP to address some of the root causes hindering sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The Symposium in Siem Reap (20–21 August 2018) on the importance of localizing the SDGs for poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development is the third in the series of ASEAN-China-UNDP symposiums that began in 2016. This publication includes highlights from the discussions at the Symposium and suggests a course of action that governments and other stakeholders can take to foster sustainable development. Through a series of case studies, the publication provides a glimpse into the direction that countries and other stakeholders (specifically in ASEAN) are taking to achieve the SDGs, as well as showcases the different approaches that countries are taking to strengthen the core enablers for localizing the SDGs.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORDS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	8
CHAPTER I THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT IN ASEAN	10
CHAPTER II SDG LOCALIZATION	21
CHAPTER III ENABLING POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SDG LOCALIZATION	30
CASE STUDY 1: STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING SDG INNOVATION PILOT ZONE INITIATIVE, CHINA	41
CASE STUDY 2: FROM POLICY COHERENCE TO SDG IMPLEMENTATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN INDONESIA	49
CHAPTER IV DATA ECOSYSTEMS FOR SDG LOCALIZATION	58
CASE STUDY 3: THE PHILIPPINES – USING A COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM FOR SDG TRACKING AND PRIORITIZATION	64
CASE STUDY 4: RISK INFORMED PUBLIC INVESTMENT PLANNING IN CAMBODIA, AND LAOS	76
CHAPTER V STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR LOCALIZING SDGs	83
CASE STUDY 5: SUPPORTING YOUTH-LED SOLUTIONS FOR SDGs IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIET NAM	92
CASE STUDY 6: PUBLIC PRIVATE COOPERATION IN THAILAND AND SDG FINANCING	98

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