

**SPEECH BY ACWO DR JUNE GOH
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Members of ASEAN's Committee on Women

Thank you for allowing ACWO, the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisation, to join the Open Session of the 18th ACW Meeting. I am very honored to be here today to deliver the ACWO Vision 2025 statement.

For some who might not be aware, ACWO comprises of the National Council of Women's Organisations in each ASEAN member state with the ACWO board being made up of the respective Presidents.

ACWO was formed by in 1981 and was formally established at a meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia. The meeting was held in conjunction with the reactivation of the ASEAN Women's Programme (which has been renamed to ACW), the ASEAN Governments' grouping charged with the responsibility of women in development programmes.

For ACWO, our mission is:

1. To coordinate and act as a confederation for national women organizations of the ASEAN member countries in order
 - To secure all such reforms for equality in human rights, status and opportunities
 - To urge the women of the ASEAN's member countries to realize and accept their responsibilities in the exercise of their rights and influence in public and private life to ensure respect for human dignity without distinction as to sex, race, creed or status
 - To promote co-operation, peace and understanding, and increase mutual support among women
 - To participate and cooperate in constructive efforts for national and regional development
2. To serve and act as a resource center for the gathering and dissemination of information, news and other materials relevant to the objectives of the ACWO
3. To carry out studies, research and training programmes relating to women, children and the family in the ASEAN region

4. To provide a forum for exchange and discussion on issues relating to the advancement of women in all fields and the welfare of the ASEAN region especially where it relates to women, children and the family

Singapore has taken over the presidency of ACWO on 28th November 2018, for a period of 2 years and The Singapore Council of Women's Organisation, the national coordinating body in Singapore would like to take this opportunity as the president to chart ACWO's direction forward and contribute to certain areas in ASEAN.

I would now present our ACWO Vision 2025 Statement:

We, the Leaders of the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations of Southeast Asian Nations (ACWO), gather today in Brunei Darussalam to affirm our commitment to the aims and purposes of the Association as set forth in our constitution.

The last several decades have delivered major progress for women worldwide. Some gender gaps have narrowed considerably. Women are now a market of around 500 million people with a combined gross domestic product of US\$600 billion. Specifically, in Southeast Asia, according to a 2016 report on Innovation for Women and Economic Development by APEC, its economic success is primarily contributed by women who occupied about 60% – 80% of jobs in the export sectors and SME owners in the APEC regions. Globally, nearly 83% of adult women were literate as of 2016, indicative of a monumental increase from the 1970s when only around 61% were. Evidently, women have achieved considerable progress in various fields such as leadership, education, economic growth and significant poverty alleviation over the past years. However, there are some disparities which still exist.

We have come together to work out a vision for ASEAN, predicated on today's realities and prospects, in the years leading to the Year 2025.

We resolve to build upon these achievements to gain greater independence and to work towards the full integration of women in development and participation in the areas below through co-created solutions.

Advancing ASEAN Smart Nation Cities

Smart Nation is a national effort to utilise the power of digital technologies, such as information and communication technologies (ICTs), to catalyse growth and innovation across all domains. We must ensure women of all segments of society benefit from them.

As a community of women, we should champion an empowering culture -- Bridging the advantages of smart technologies (with the support of their community partners) to women, in order for them to better manage work-family balance and lead fulfilling lives. We will work to:

- I. **Inform** and **Educate** women in populations about the technological initiatives as the world progresses so as to be technologically enabled in all areas. This can be achieved through campaigns, local and international volunteers, education in schools and workplaces, and government legislations.
- II. **Digitalise** citizenship registration and application for women and children to enhance their protection.
- III. **Establish** technological infrastructures to help women in the business sectors as well as social service sectors.
- IV. **Simplify** and package digital infrastructures into easily understandable information which can be applicable to all sectors of women in society.
- V. **Pitch** to governmental private sectors the need for women to be included as part of Smart Nation initiatives and to put in resources and funding for the above points.
- VI. **Ensure** Cybersecurity is part of the curriculum.

Enhancing Quality of Women's Lives in Ageing

- I. **Strengthen** financial support for family caregivers to ensure retirement security.
- II. **Provide** enabling employment conditions to help family caregivers balance work and caregiving responsibilities.
- III. **Encourage** employers to develop Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) tailored to the needs of both employers and employees with caregiving responsibilities, incentivise them to offer the arrangements more widely and increase take up rate of FWAs.

- IV. **Raise** public awareness and training on supporting family caregivers, and financial literacy.
- V. **Advocate and develop** good quality home- and community-based care services that are more widely available and affordable.

Women and Entrepreneurship

ACWO aims to empower women economically by forging ties that would enhance entrepreneurial activities between states and developing best practices in the creation of social service enterprises that will help financially disadvantaged women gain financial independence.

Conclusion

All 10 women's national councils in the ASEAN region will strive to work in concerted effort to provide enabling environments for women in the workplace where they can fully maximize their economic potential in various areas such as finance, human capital development and leadership; information access; and innovation and technology. We, as women leaders of ASEAN, pledge our determination and commitment to bringing this ASEAN Vision for the Year 2025 to reality.

Hence, we will work together and strive to collaborate with national governments and relevant ASEAN regional and international entities, to advance these areas of focus in ASEAN. We will leverage on our wide network of women organizations in each of the 10 ASEAN member states, for the advancement of ASEAN towards the shared vision of a dynamic ASEAN community living in peace, stability, harmony and prosperity. We seek ACW's endorsement on our vision so that we can work with you on the advancement of women in ASEAN.

With your endorsement and support, I believe that ACWO as a confederation can contribute, add value and help advance areas that ASEAN is focusing on.

Thank you.