2003 DECLARATION OF ASEAN CONCORD II

1.An ASEAN Community shall be established comprising three pillars, namely political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural cooperation that are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing for the purpose of ensuring durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region;

2.ASEAN shall continue its efforts to ensure closer and mutually beneficial integration among its member states and among their peoples, and to promote regional peace and stability, security, development and prosperity with a view to realizing an ASEAN Community that is open, dynamic and resilient;

3.ASEAN shall respond to the new dynamics within the respective ASEAN Member Countries and shall urgently and effectively address the challenge of translating ASEAN cultural diversities and different economic levels into equitable development opportunity and prosperity, in an environment of solidarity, regional resilience and harmony;

4.ASEAN shall nurture common values, such as habit of consultation to discuss political issues and the willingness to share information on matters of common concern, such as environmental degradation, maritime security cooperation, the enhancement of defense cooperation among ASEAN countries, develop a set of socio-political values and principles, and resolve to settle long-standing disputes through peaceful means;

5.The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) is the key code of conduct governing relations between states and a diplomatic instrument for the promotion of peace and stability in the region;

6.The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) shall remain the primary forum in enhancing political and security cooperation in the Asia Pacific region, as well as the pivot in building peace and stability in the region. ASEAN shall enhance its role in further advancing the stages of cooperation within the ARF to ensure the security of the Asia Pacific region;

7.ASEAN is committed to deepening and broadening its internal economic integration and linkages with the world economy to realize an ASEAN Economic Community through a bold, pragmatic and unified strategy;

8.ASEAN shall further build on the momentum already gained in the ASEAN+3 process so as to further draw synergies through broader and deeper cooperation in various areas;

9.ASEAN shall build upon opportunities for mutually beneficial regional integration arising from its existing initiatives and those with partners, through enhanced trade and investment links as well as through IAI process and the RIA;

10.ASEAN shall continue to foster a community of caring societies and promote a common regional identity;

11.The ASEAN Security Community is envisaged to bring ASEAN’s political and security cooperation to a higher plane to ensure that countries in the region live at peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment. The ASEAN Security Community members shall rely exclusively on peaceful processes in the settlement of intra-regional differences and regard their security as fundamentally linked to one another and bound by geographic location, common vision and objectives.

12.The ASEAN Security Community, recognizing the sovereign right of the member countries to pursue their individual foreign policies and defense arrangements and taking into account the strong interconnections among political, economic and social realities, subscribes to the principle of comprehensive security as having broad political, economic, social and cultural aspects in consonance with the ASEAN Vision 2020 rather than to a defense pact, military alliance or a joint foreign policy.

13.ASEAN shall continue to promote regional solidarity and cooperation. Member Countries shall exercise their rights to lead their national existence free from outside interference in their internal affairs.

14.The ASEAN Security Community shall abide by the UN Charter and other principles of international law and uphold ASEAN’s principles of non-interference, consensus-based decision-making, national and regional resilience, respect for national sovereignty, the renunciation of the threat or the use of force, and peaceful settlement of differences and disputes.

15.Maritime issues and concerns are transboundary in nature, and therefore shall be addressed regionally in holistic, integrated and comprehensive manner. Maritime cooperation between and among ASEAN member countries shall contribute to the evolution of the ASEAN Security Community.

16.Existing ASEAN political instruments such as the Declaration on ZOPFAN, the TAC, and the SEANWFZ Treaty shall continue to play a pivotal role in the area of confidence building measures, preventive diplomacy and the approaches to conflict resolution.

17.The High Council of the TAC shall be the important component in the ASEAN Security Community since it reflects ASEAN’s commitment to resolve all differences, disputes and conflicts peacefully.

18.The ASEAN Security Community shall contribute to further promoting peace and security in the wider Asia Pacific region and reflect ASEAN’s determination to move forward at a pace comfortable to all. In this regard, the ARF shall remain the main forum for regional security dialogue, with ASEAN as the primary driving force.

19.The ASEAN Security Community is open and outward looking in respect of actively engaging ASEAN’s friends and Dialogue Partners to promote peace and stability in the region, and shall build on the ARF to facilitate consultation and cooperation between ASEAN and its friends and Partners on regional security matters.

20.The ASEAN Security Community shall fully utilize the existing institutions and mechanisms within ASEAN with a view to strengthening national and regional capacities to counter terrorism, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and other transnational crimes; and shall work to ensure that the Southeast Asian Region remains free of all weapons of mass destruction. It shall enable ASEAN to demonstrate a greater capacity and responsibility of being the primary driving force of the ARF.

21.The ASEAN Security Community shall explore enhanced cooperation with the United Nations as well as other international and regional bodies for the maintenance of international peace and security.

22.ASEAN shall explore innovative ways to increase its security and establish modalities for the ASEAN Security Community, which include, inter alia, the following elements: norms-setting, conflict prevention, approaches to conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building.

23.The ASEAN Economic Community is the realisation of the end-goal of economic integration as outlined in the ASEAN Vision 2020, to create a stable, prosperous and highly competitive ASEAN economic region in which there is a free flow of goods, services, investment and a freer flow of capital, equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities in year 2020.

24.The ASEAN Economic Community is based on a convergence of interests among ASEAN members to deepen and broaden economic integration efforts through existing and new initiatives with clear timelines.

25.The ASEAN Economic Community shall establish ASEAN as a single market and production base, turning the diversity that characterises the region into opportunities for business complementation making the ASEAN a more dynamic and stronger segment of the global supply chain. ASEAN’s strategy shall consist of the integration of ASEAN and enhancing ASEAN’s economic competitiveness. In moving towards the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN shall, inter alia, institute new mechanisms and measures to strengthen the implementation of its existing economic initiatives including the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS) and ASEAN Investment Area (AIA); accelerate regional integration in the priority sectors; facilitate movement of business persons, skilled labour and talents; and strengthen the institutional mechanisms of ASEAN, including the improvement of the existing ASEAN Dispute Settlement Mechanism to ensure expeditious and legally binding resolution of any economic disputes. As a first step towards the realization of the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN shall implement the recommendations of the High Level Task Force on ASEAN Economic Integration as annexed.

26.The ASEAN Economic Community shall ensure that deepening and broadening integration of ASEAN shall be accompanied by technical and development cooperation in order to address the development divide and accelerate the economic integration of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam through IAI and RIA so that the benefits of ASEAN integration are shared and enable all ASEAN Member Countries to move forward in a unified manner.

27.The realization of a fully integrated economic community requires implementation of both liberalization and cooperation measures. There is a need to enhance cooperation and integration activities in other areas. These will involve, among others, human resources development and capacity building; recognition of educational qualifications; closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies; trade financing measures; enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity; development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN; integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing; and enhancing private sector involvement.

28.The ASEAN Socio-cultural Community, in consonance with the goal set by ASEAN Vision 2020, envisages a Southeast Asia bonded together in partnership as a community of caring societies.

29.In line with the programme of action set by the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord, the Community shall foster cooperation in social development aimed at raising the standard of living of disadvantaged groups and the rural population, and shall seek the active involvement of all sectors of society, in particular women, youth, and local communities.

30.ASEAN shall ensure that its work force shall be prepared for, and benefit from, economic integration by investing more resources for basic and higher education, training, science and technology development, job creation, and social protection. The development and enhancement of human resources is a key strategy for employment generation, alleviating poverty and socio-economic disparities, and ensuring economic growth with equity. ASEAN shall continue existing efforts to promote regional mobility and mutual recognition of professional credentials, talents, and skills development.

31.ASEAN shall further intensify cooperation in the area of public health, including in the prevention and control of infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and SARS, and support joint regional actions to increase access to affordable medicines. The security of the Community is enhanced when poverty and diseases are held in check, and the peoples of ASEAN are assured of adequate health care.

32.The Community shall nurture talent and promote interaction among ASEAN scholars, writers, artists and media practitioners to help preserve and promote ASEAN’s diverse cultural heritage while fostering regional identity as well as cultivating people’s awareness of ASEAN.

33.The Community shall intensify cooperation in addressing problems associated with population growth, unemployment, environmental degradation and transboundary pollution as well as disaster management in the region to enable individual members to fully realize their development potentials and to enhance the mutual ASEAN spirit.

34.We hereby pledge to our peoples our resolve and commitment to bring the ASEAN Community into reality and, for this purpose, task the concerned Ministers to implement this Declaration.