Chair’s Statement

“The Belt and Road Initiative and Connectivity between Asia & Europe”

1. Model ASEM Chengdu Spin-off was held on 12-13 July 2018 at Sichuan University, Chengdu, China in the gap year of the 13th and 14th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM13 and ASEM FMM14). Under the theme “The Belt and Road Initiative and Connectivity between Asia & Europe” more than 80 student delegates from ASEM Partner countries attended the meeting. Model ASEM is a political simulation of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM) where participants are invited to role-play their respective ASEAN Partners’ positions and negotiate in order to develop a consensus-based Chair’s Statement.

2. United in the belief of the strengths of cultural diversity and transcontinental prospects for peace and stability, the Model ASEM Leaders raised major areas of concern on Asia-Europe relations and cooperation in accordance with this year’s theme “The Belt and Road Initiative and Connectivity between Asia & Europe”. These were organised across three thematic areas – Policy Coordination, Pragmatic Cooperation and People-to-People Exchange – in order to comprehensively promote the coordination of sustainable development policies across Asia and Europe.

A. Policy Coordination

3. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the need for more collaboration and coordination on infrastructure to provide better opportunities for trade and commerce between Asia and Europe.

4. The Model ASEM Leaders reaffirmed ASEAN’s commitment to enhance intergovernmental cooperation, regional integration and diversified diplomacy in its true spirit. They suggested to host seminars and create a regional abutment to exchange ideas of development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

5. The Model ASEM Leaders encouraged ASEAN Partners to participate actively in dialogue and policy coordination, including on the Belt and Road Initiative, by establishing trust among ASEAN Partners, with the long-term vision to enhance cooperation among ASEAN partners and to develop mutual trust and equal partnership opportunities.

6. The Model ASEM Leaders stressed the significance of sharing effective legislative experience, including technological innovation and management practices among ASEAN Partners, to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda.

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As Model ASEM is a simulation-based project, the points listed in this Chair’s Statement do not necessarily correspond with the official positions of ASEAN Governments, the organisers or views of the individual participants.
7. The Model ASEM Leaders expressed concern on the barrier of foreign investment and international trade between Asia, Europe, and Africa. The Leaders called for further cooperation and negotiations via bilateral investment treaties and multilateral investment agreements between Asia and Europe.

8. The Model ASEM Leaders attached great attention to the Belt and Road Initiative and the Trans-European Transport Networks, while recognising the needs of ASEM Partners to:
   a. Increase and coordinate financial investments towards infrastructure programmes;
   b. Enhance coordination and participation fostering equal results;
   c. Increase accessibility and connectivity of the transport industry (like aviation and railway industry).

9. The Model ASEM Leaders committed to increase financial investments towards infrastructure programmes among ASEM Partners, including the EU Infrastructure Investment Plan and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The Leaders also called for more Asian and European financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank.

B. Pragmatic Cooperation

Trade: Import-Export Economy
10. The ASEM Leaders proposed more inter-regional connectivity and trade for mutual economic benefit for all countries.

Technology Transfer
11. The ASEM Leaders proposed focusing on the development of the digital economy, with leading technologically-advanced countries transferring their digital know-how to less developed countries on the technology front, including but not limited to e-commerce, software and computer science.

12. The ASEM Leaders encouraged the establishment of a Research and Development Fund under the Belt and Road Initiative among ASEM Partners with China’s support on innovation and technology development, including but not limited to agriculture, infrastructure and natural disaster management.

Finance and Economic Grants & Investments
13. The ASEM Leaders proposed ASEM Partner countries to make further investments in technologies specific to transportation infrastructure with countries they are in cooperation with, such as facilitation of trade, for mutual benefit.

14. The ASEM Leaders proposed greater inter-regional cooperation via the Asian-European Economic Corridor.

C. People-to-People Exchange

Increasing Connectivity through Tourism Development
15. The Model ASEM Leaders called for targeted regional cooperation amongst neighbouring ASEM Partner countries. Regional cooperative tourism programmes such as neighbouring countries joint travel itineraries, mutual assistance tourism programmes and various other forms of policy are welcomed to be address in future ASEM Meetings. The Leaders agreed that understanding neighbouring countries is essential to bridge cultural gaps across the regions.
16. The Model ASEM Leaders, concerned with mitigating environmental problems and other effects caused by tourism, agreed on working towards sustainable solutions in accordance with the Paris Agreement, such as raising awareness, sanitation of tourist destinations, the involvement of environmental organisations and the encouragement of usage of energy-saving transport tours.

**Cooperation on Infrastructure-building**

17. The Model ASEM Leaders stressed the importance of addressing cybersecurity problems. Solutions include nurturing young IT professionals by promoting technology exchanges, regular experience sharing with a proper respect for intellectual property and out of mutual benefit, and the creation of platforms in this field. The ASEM Leaders agreed on the need to ensure cybersecurity and emphasised exchange of information on cybercrime.

18. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the benefits of working towards Asia-Europe transport interoperability, strengthening people-to-people exchange by the establishment of road interoperability in the air, on land and at sea.

**Education**

19. The Model ASEM Leaders agreed on the importance of educational exchanges between Higher Education Institutions and that the creation of a specialised platform is important for students wanting to go abroad. ASEM Partner countries should establish a platform that includes detailed information to aid in the preparation process before the exchange.

20. The Model ASEM Leaders recognised the importance of teachers in the framework of education and proposed to enhance the exchanges among teachers and to establish training programmes with the aim of improving teaching skills and promoting the sharing of best practices through financial support and scholarships.

21. The Model ASEM Leaders called for the creation and implementation of more programmes and financial support to consolidate cultural exchanges among ASEM Partner countries.

22. The Model ASEM Leaders emphasised on the convenience of people going abroad to promote cultural exchanges. The Leaders suggested simplifying visa processes to increase participation in cultural exchange activities.

23. The ASEM Leaders proposed ten cities in ASEM Partners countries are selected and changed bi-annually, to host product exhibitions for greater mutual understanding of each country’s trade specialties.

**D. Concluding Remarks**

24. The Model ASEM Leaders expressed their sincere gratitude to all Model ASEM Chengdu Spin-off partners, in particular Sichuan University as organiser of the conference and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) as the supporter, and to the host country China for the remarkable hospitality extended to all participants throughout their time in Chengdu. The Model ASEM Leaders also thanked the Government of China for its political and financial support of the Model ASEM project series, and the ASEM Governments for their financial contributions to this edition. The Leaders recommended the continuation of this Forum as the official youth side event of the ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meetings and encouraged ASEM Partners to support potential spin-off activities in their own countries.