



## MODEL ASEM SINGAPORE 2015

### THE SILK ROAD RENAISSANCE: REDEFINING ASIA-EUROPE SOCIO-CULTURAL & ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

10<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> April | National University of Singapore (NUS)

#### Chair's Statement

#### of the Model Asia-Europe Meeting Singapore 2015 (Model ASEM Singapore 2015)

Singapore, 10-12 April 2015

#### *“The Silk Road Renaissance: Redefining Asia-Europe Socio-Cultural & Economic Engagement”*

1. The Model Asia-Europe Meeting (Model ASEM) was held on 10 – 12 April 2015 in Singapore. The meeting was attended by 100 Leaders<sup>1</sup>, including the Heads of Youth Delegations representing fifty-one Asian and European countries, the Youth Representative for the President of the European Council, the Youth Representative for the President of the European Commission and the Youth Representative for the Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The meeting was hosted by the Youth Representative for the President of Mongolia and chaired by the Youth Representative for the President of the European Council.
2. Under the overarching theme of the Model ASEM Singapore 2015 “The Silk Road Renaissance: Redefining Asia-Europe Socio-Cultural & Economic Engagement”, Leaders engaged in comprehensive discussion, shared their perspectives on pertinent regional and global issues of mutual interest, reflected upon

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<sup>1</sup> “Leaders” throughout this document refer to the Youth Delegates role-playing as the 53 ASEM Heads of Governments at Model ASEM Singapore 2015.

collaboration between Asia and Europe in the three pillars of political, economic and socio-cultural domains, and agreed on the future direction of Model ASEM.

3. Leaders reaffirmed the importance of Model ASEM as a dialogue forum for youth from ASEM countries to share their views on Asia-Europe relations and to cooperate towards a common vision of the ASEM process.
4. Leaders noted with appreciation the fruitful outcomes of the previous 6 Model ASEM simulations organised by ASEF and ASEF University Alumni Network (ASEFUAN), taking place in 2004 and 2012 in Singapore, in 2007 in Manila (Philippines), in 2008 in Beijing (China), in 2009 in Le Havre (France) and in 2014 in Milan (Italy).

## **Strengthening Partnership in Global Political Matters through Asia-Europe Engagement**

### **Human Rights**

5. Leaders affirmed their desire to respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
6. Leaders highlighted the importance of ensuring all their citizens are equally protected in accordance with the rule of law.
7. Leaders recognised the need to raise awareness amongst their citizens on human rights.

### **Migration**

8. Leaders acknowledged that there were various causes for migration, and understood that different measures might be needed to handle each type of migration to ensure the well-being of migrants.
9. Leaders noted the need to make the migration process safer through bilateral and multilateral dialogue and coordination.

10. Leaders also affirmed the importance of integrating migrants into their respective societies.

### Climate Change

11. Leaders were deeply concerned about the devastating effects of climate change on the environment.

12. Leaders noted the possible effects that environmental degradation might have on the movement of people.

13. Leaders believed ASEM members should collaborate to make headways in reducing environmental pollution.

14. Leaders therefore saw the need for the development of sustainable sources of energy by promoting research, the transfer of knowledge and sharing of best practices through the exchange of technical expertise.

15. Leaders understood that the means to achieve material action to address the problems are readily available; henceforth proposed that developed countries offer sustainable infrastructure and technology to less developed countries on the fields of but not limited to agriculture, energy, and water management.

16. Leaders acknowledged that green practices were important in protecting the environment, hence further proposed to drive adoption of clean energy sources.

17. Leaders believed that implementation of the carbon tax should be tailored proportionally based on the contribution of carbon emission and the economic strength of the country.

18. Leaders recognised that environmental choices made by both the private and public sector would have significant impact on climate change.

19. Leaders agreed that funding on climate initiatives should be increased with the introduction of a Green Climate Fund for all countries with contributions from institutions such as the World Bank.
20. Leaders concurred that engagement between the energy sector and governments should be strengthened.
21. Leaders welcomed the opportunity for further dialogue to follow up on current negotiations on climate change.
22. Leaders further urged for further substantial political action in dealing with Climate Change.

## **Asia-Europe Cooperation in Fostering Economic Sustainability and Prosperity**

### **Reducing Trade Barriers and Increasing Talent Mobility**

23. Leaders affirmed their commitment to deepen engagement to forge deeper economic integration.
24. Leaders agreed on the importance of reducing trade barriers and tariffs hence agriculture and food products should be subjected to equal and transparent standards.
25. Leaders agreed that two-way human capital exchange between Europe and Asia should be strengthened
26. Leaders agreed upon the importance of relaxing immigration restrictions to allow migration flows into countries with ageing population.

### **Investing in Physical Infrastructure**

27. Leaders recognized the importance of modernization and the provision of essential physical infrastructure to boost economic competitiveness as well as improve the standards of living in ASEM member countries.

28. Leaders recognized the importance of infrastructural reforms to increase productivity and connectedness.

### **Promoting Tourism**

29. Leaders recognized the need to ensure stability and security of their countries in order to attract tourism.

30. Leaders were committed to building essential infrastructure both in and between countries to facilitate tourism

31. Leaders emphasized the need to preserve heritage, traditions and culture to promote tourism.

32. Leaders encouraged better marketing of tourist attractions in all countries.

33. Leaders hoped to establish a better visa policy to improve mobility across ASEM countries.

### **Meeting the Needs of Ageing Population**

34. Leaders recognized that new challenges stemming from the change in demographics result in a host of related issues to be tackled.

35. Leaders recognized the importance of economic restructuring towards a knowledge based/service-intensive economy to overcome labour challenges for ASEM members reaching the end of the dependency dividend.

36. Leaders recognized the need for healthcare policy and infrastructure reforms in meeting the challenges of an ageing population.

37. Leaders recognized the importance of reforms in social policies in order to help reverse or reduce the effects of ageing population.

## **Promoting Asia-Europe Active Partnership in Common Socio-Cultural Issues**

### **Education and Skills Development**

38. Leaders were cognisant of the importance of learning from each other's strengths as a way to improve their own countries' systems. Leaders emphasised the significance of cross-cultural sharing and understanding.

### **Vocation Training and Apprenticeship Programme Supported by MNCs**

39. Leaders proposed introducing an Asia-Europe Apprenticeship Programme, where MNCs in Europe and Asia are encouraged to set up training institutes in ASEM countries, providing training for the skill sets that MNCs required.

### **Creating Opportunities for Inter-Cultural Educational Exchanges**

40. Leaders acknowledged the successes of mobility practices in Europe, like the Erasmus+ by the European Union and the VIE programme in France. Leaders noted that Asian countries can learn from some of the mobility practices in Europe and called for existing platforms such as ASEAN to be tapped upon to facilitate this.

41. Leaders suggested introducing a full scholarship programme for all ASEM countries, and the specifics would be determined at the ASEM Education Minister's Meeting. However, in order to benefit most countries, Leaders called for quotas to be placed upon countries so that large countries would not take up all the places available.

42. Leaders acknowledged the importance of cross-cultural understanding and communication. Leaders suggested an Asia-Europe Educational Accreditation (AEEA) program to be established to set up standard measurements so that degree obtained in different universities could be universally recognised.

43. Leaders were cognisant of financial and travel constraints arising from cross-regional exchanges in relations to education. As such, Leaders suggested that providing enhanced financial support at the tertiary education and exploring the possibility of online education.
44. Leaders explored the possibility of developing and making better use of online platforms for learning (e-learning). These online courses would be made available for youths from various countries to utilise.
45. Leaders had taken into account the cultural differences that might exist between Asia and Europe due to different education systems, traditions and mindsets. Therefore, Leaders called for more inter-cultural exchanges between and within the 2 regions which will be initiated at an earlier education stage.

#### **Improving Accessibility in Education**

46. Leaders acknowledged that rural regions within various ASEM members still did not have access to basic education.
47. Leaders acknowledged that there were certain groups of individuals including but not limited to gender, cultural, sexuality and those with disabilities within various ASEM members that were still not accorded equal and fair opportunities in education.
48. Leaders noted that ASEM members could do more to increase sharing of educational practices and policies across and within Asia and Europe, so as to improve literacy rates and the quality of education.
49. Leaders further acknowledged the technological constraints of some ASEM members in improving accessibility of education, and called for ASEM members to further deliberate on e-infrastructure for education.

#### **More Cultural and Arts Exchange**

50. Leaders mooted the idea of a mutual arts exchange in both Asia and Europe and the possibility of using technology to further cross-cultural exchange.
51. Leaders suggested for ASEM/ASEF to enhance and increase more participatory opportunities in existing cultural exchange programmes.
52. ASEM Leaders emphasised the importance of promoting volunteerism.

### **Further Strengthening Youth Engagement within the ASEM Process**

53. Leaders reaffirmed that the involvement of young Leaders in the ASEM process is crucial in achieving fruitful, constructive and sustainable Asia-Europe partnership, effectively addressing future challenges in political, economic and socio-cultural domains.
54. Leaders recognised the significance of channelling the perspectives of young Leaders across Asia and Europe and agreed that the strength of the Model ASEM is in voicing the perspectives of young Leaders to the decision-makers involved in the ASEM process.
55. Leaders acknowledged the work of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), as an important contributor to establishing youth networks across Asia and Europe through projects, such as the ASEF University, aimed at mobilising young Leaders.
56. Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to enrich their communities by utilising the Leadership and practical skills acquired at the Model ASEM 2014, to reinforce intercultural, interfaith and inter-racial understanding among the peoples of Asia and Europe.

### **Conclusion and the Future Direction of Model ASEM**

57. Leaders reaffirmed their mutual commitment to promote fresh and innovative strategies to sustainability through incorporating innovative approaches based on perspectives from young researchers from Asia and Europe.



58. Leaders welcomed the development of the Model ASEM initiative since its inception in 2004 and articulated their vision to establish the Model ASEM as the primary platform of Asia-Europe youth dialogue, in conjunction with the biennial ASEM Summit. In addition, Leaders expressed their hope to formally handover the Model ASEM Chair's Statement via youth representatives at the future ASEM Summits.

59. Leaders expressed their sincere appreciation to the Chair of the Summit, for handling of the simulation and the organiser, ASEM Young Leaders Network along with the supporters of the event: the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the S Rajaratnam Endowment, the National Youth Council (Singapore), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU Centre in Singapore, which made the Model ASEM Singapore 2015 a successful 1st edition of the spin-off activities of Model ASEM across Asia and Europe. Leaders also looked forward to the upcoming Model ASEM spin-off activities in 2015 and 2016, and the large-scale Model ASEM to be held in Mongolia in 2016.