We, the 150 participants from seven countries\(^(*)\) in the Workshop on National Policy Frameworks for Lifelong Learning in the ASEAN Countries, which was held in Ha Noi on 10 and 11 January 2013, co-organised by the Viet Nam Ministry of Education and Training, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and UNESCO in Viet Nam with the support of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok and the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (dvv international), considering the following, wish to propose to the Ministers of Education of Southeast Asian countries the below recommendations.

\textbf{Background}

Southeast Asian countries cover a land area of around 4.49 million km\(^2\), 3\% of the world’s total land area, and have a population of approximately 610 million people, 9\% of the world's total. In the last decade, these countries have made considerable progress in social and economic development. However, they continue to face challenges in their development, such as growing disparities in access to quality education and other basic social services, uneven progress in reducing poverty, and environmental problems. These challenges have created significant barriers to building inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies in the region.

\textbf{Vision}

Based on the motto, "One Vision, One Identity, One Community", ASEAN has emphasized regional cooperation through the three pillars of security cooperation, socio-cultural integration, and economic integration. Education and learning lie at the core of ASEAN’s development process as it seeks to forge a common identity and build caring and sharing societies where the welfare of all people is enhanced. Education and learning can help to create a sense of belonging to a single ASEAN socio-cultural community, with appreciation for the richness of the region’s history, languages, cultures and common values.

\(^(*)\) The seven participating countries are: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. The three other ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and Singapore) did not send their representatives to this Workshop.
Stemming from this vision, the education ministers of ASEAN countries have defined four priority educational efforts:

1. Promoting awareness of ASEAN among member states’ citizens, particularly youth;
2. Strengthening ASEAN’s identity through education;
3. Building human resources in the field of education in ASEAN member states; and
4. Strengthening ASEAN’s university network.

**Rationale**

To realise ASEAN’s aspirations, there is an urgent need to promote the concept of lifelong learning for all and to build a learning society in the region. It is critical that in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, priority is given to lifelong learning for all and building a learning society for the following reasons:

1. In this globalised, fast-changing world, continuous learning allows people to be self-sufficient and adaptable to changes in society. Building a harmonious ASEAN Community requires all citizens of ASEAN countries to be lifelong learners, and all agencies to become providers of lifelong learning opportunities.
2. By adopting lifelong learning for all as a master concept for education and training, first-class national education systems can be planned, expanded and transformed to cater to people’s learning and development needs, and to provide them with learning opportunities in all settings and modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) at every stage of their lives (infants, children, adolescents and adults).
3. Applying the concept of lifelong learning for all can help to build synergies between government policies in different sectors, in particular in education, employment, health, culture and welfare.
4. Lifelong learning for all contributes to social cohesion, fosters a more equitable society, harnesses cultural diversity, enhances well-being, and ensures sustainable development and prosperity.
**Recommendations**

**On policy and legislation:**

1. Develop national policy or legislation to promote lifelong learning for all as integral to national social and economic development and as a key component in the post-2015 Development Agenda;

2. Establish national coordination mechanisms by involving all related government departments, the private sector, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders;

3. Design and implement monitoring mechanisms to measure and report on progress, achievements and lesson learned, and to facilitate evidence-based policy developments;

**On finance:**

4. Increase financial resources in compliance with legislation and policy to promote lifelong learning for all and allocate an equitable share of investment across sub-sectors of education and training;

5. Develop mechanisms to mobilise additional funding and other resources from the public and private sectors, social organisations and individuals;

**On provision of learning opportunities and enhancement of quality:**

6. Expand the provision of rich and diversified learning opportunities;

7. Create learner-friendly environments that meet the learning needs of all, giving special attention to disadvantaged and marginalized groups to achieve gender equality and social inclusion;

8. Take concrete measures to make education structures, curricula and teaching-learning practices more oriented to lifelong learning;

9. Enhance the use of ICTs and the development of multilingual open learning resources;
On awareness-raising:

10. Promote common understanding of the concepts of lifelong learning for all and the learning society through open discussion and consultation between all sectors;
11. Regenerate public awareness of the values of education and learning as keys to development, prosperity, harmony and happiness;

On regional collaboration:

12. Develop an ASEAN policy framework on lifelong learning for all;
13. Set up an ASEAN lifelong learning fund to support innovative initiatives promoting lifelong learning for all in ASEAN countries;
14. Strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building to promote lifelong learning for all;
15. Promote the recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of all forms of learning, leading eventually to an ASEAN Lifelong Learning Qualification Framework.
PROMOTING
LIFELONG LEARNING
FOR ALL