



**THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE 42nd ASEAN INTER-
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Theme: Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025

**CONCEPT NOTE FOR RESOLUTION ON PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT IN THE FUTURE OF WORK THROUGH DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL
INCLUSION**

(Proposed by Brunei Darussalam)

As ASEAN's growing economy follows an increasingly prominent global trend towards the development of the digital economy, the role of women in the economy has never been more pivotal to the region's economic recovery and growth.

Despite significant progress being made towards the further development of women empowerment and gender equality in ASEAN, gender disparity remains to be an impeding challenge towards achieving a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible ASEAN Community. OECD (2018) concluded that women continue to be unable to gain access to the internet due to hurdles to access, affordability, education and lack of technological literacy, meanwhile McKinsey Global Institute estimated that 49% of women are excluded from financial services (ASEAN Secretariat, 2018), which indicates persistent digital gender divide and financial gender gaps.

Furthermore, our world of work has experienced a paradigm shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has greatly affected the future of work, workplace and workforce dynamic which has further imposed unprecedented challenges for women's equal economic participation, especially with heavy utilisation of digital technologies. Thus, it is imperative for ASEAN Member States to ensure our workforce, especially our women to be equipped with the technological literacy, skills and tools to better adapt and harness technological innovation, especially in digital finance.

ASEAN emphasises that women's economic empowerment is central in achieving inclusive and sustainable development where it has been embedded in goals and targets of the ASEAN Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal particularly Goal 5 Achieving Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls. ASEAN's commitment towards promoting women economic empowerment further manifested through other ASEAN-led mechanisms.

Brunei Darussalam as ASEAN Chairmanship 2021 with the theme "We Care, We Prepare and We Prosper" will underline three priority areas, namely caring for people and each other's well-being, preparing for future opportunities and challenges and prospering together in a unified region. Further, ASEAN has proposed Ten Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs) under its three strategic thrusts; Recovery, Digitalisation and Sustainability. Encompassing this theme and the Ten PEDs, the Draft Resolution on Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Future of Work Through Digital and Financial Inclusion commands ASEAN Member States to catalyse efforts in addressing the digital gender divide and to empower women participation through the

reinforcement of existing policies, the establishment of new effective measures and diligent information sharing. It is hoped that with this Draft Resolution, ASEAN Member States' governments will look to implement these policies to help prepare ASEAN women towards economic prosperity through digital and financial inclusion.