THE 46TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
16-22 September 2025
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Parliament at the Forefront for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable ASEAN

(Res.46GA/2025/WAIPA/02)

RESOLUTION ON

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN ASEAN THROUGH THE CARE ECONOMY

Sponsored by Malaysia
Co-Sponsored by Cambodia

The Forty-sixth General Assembly:

Acknowledging United Nations Resolution No. E/CN.5/2024/L.5 on Promoting Care and Support Systems for Social Development; Resolution No. A/RES/77/317 on International Day of Care and Support; Resolution No. A/HRC/RES/54/6 on Centrality of Care and Support from a Human Rights Perspective, and in accordance with Resolution No. ILC.112.Resolution V Concerning Decent Work and the Care Economy by the International Labour Organization and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which collectively recognise the need to redistribute care responsibilities and increase public investment in inclusive care systems;

Reaffirming the commitments enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Articles 5 and 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979); Articles 18 and 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989); the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (2012); the International Labour Organization Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and Convention No. 189 on Domestic Workers; the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), which collectively uphold the rights of women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities;

Bearing in mind the need to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 5: achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, target 5.4: recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work, and target 8.5: achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men;

Reiterating the 2020 declaration by the International Alliance of Women on Caring

Economy: Putting People and the Planet before Profits, and the ASEAN Committee on Women which recognises women's invaluable contributions to society and places care at the centre, while also highlighting the exacerbation of inequalities due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

Reemphasising the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community, adopted in August 2024, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)'s Model Framework for Action on the Care Economy, including ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy (ACFCE), adopted in 2021, which outlines ASEAN commitment to promote action plans and policies aimed at strengthening the care economy and reducing women's unpaid care and domestic work in the region;

Reaffirming ASEAN Community Vision 2045, which underscores inclusivity, resilience, and equality, and recognising that a strengthened care economy is critical to achieving these long-term aspirations;

Recalling AIPA Resolutions No. Res.43GA/2022/Soc/03 on Strengthening Social Health Protection to Address the Challenges in ASEAN; and Res.43GA/2022/Soc/02 on Enhancing Digital Transformation for Inclusive Social Protection, which are foundational to advancing the broader agenda of strengthening care system in the ASEAN region;

Acknowledging the importance of redistributing care responsibilities to advance gender equality, the critical role of public-private partnership in investing in the care economy to stimulate inclusive economic growth, and improving the need to enhance quality of life through strengthened care systems;

Deeply concerned that the compounding impacts of climate change and global crises have deepened gender disparities across ASEAN, disproportionately forcing women into exploitative informal work and unstable unpaid care burdens that perpetuate poverty and systemic economic marginalisation, and the need for climate-resilient care infrastructure; and

Acknowledging that women continue to bear a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, which limits their opportunities in education, employment, and public life, and stressing that strengthening the care economy is essential to redistribute this burden, expand economic empowerment, and advance gender equality.

Hereby resolves to:

Position ASEAN as a unique platform and model for achieving SDG 5.4 and 8.5 by implementing gender-responsive public services, care infrastructure, and social

protection policies while developing robust compliance mechanisms and standardised metrics to measure progress of the care economy as a vital driver of inclusive growth, job creation, and increased female labour force participation across ASEAN and develop a regional framework for monitoring progress, such as ASEAN Care Index for care satisfaction and sustainability;

Urge AIPA Member Parliaments to establish effective coordination mechanisms and enhance regional linkages to ensure that workers in the care economy have equal access to employment opportunities, information, and development resources;

Call for strengthened policies and regulations that mandate comprehensive psychological support, accessible respite care services, and employer-supported programmes to safeguard caregivers from the compounded burdens of care work and dual paid-unpaid labour demands, and provide training and capacity-building programmes for caregivers;

Encourage AIPA Member Parliaments to design models that enable the full and meaningful participation of women of all ages, including older women, in social activities and the country's economic growth, by supporting policies and measures for public investment and incentivising private sector such as corporate tax incentives in care infrastructure, including digital platforms and technologies, develop intergenerational care centres, and community-driven or community-based models to support care services, boost the care economy as a driver of gender equality, and promote community-based care services;

Recommend AIPA Member Parliaments to consider supporting measures to institutionalise curricula in the public and private sectors on care economy innovations, such as climate-resilient care infrastructure and digital platforms, promoting regional and international dialogue to raise awareness, share best practices and foster the active participation of women among Member States, while incorporating actionable policies aligned with the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on the Care Economy and fostering innovations;

Support the collection and analysis of time-use data on unpaid care work to develop policy and action plans that recognise, value, and redistribute of unpaid care work to address structural gender inequalities;

Urge AIPA Member Parliaments to actively engage with stakeholders, including civil society and groups representing women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, rural/indigenous communities, and other marginalised and vulnerable groups, to advocate for culturally sensitive, affordable, and scalable care solutions while advancing economic empowerment for caregivers;

Support the formulation of common ASEAN standards and benchmarks for care-

economy development, tailored to the regional context and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, thereby strengthening the foundation for gender equality, improving quality of life, and fostering sustainable, shared prosperity across the ASEAN Community;

Call upon AIPA Member Parliaments to support caregiver tax incentives and benefits, including other forms of social protection and recognition, particularly for households supporting elderly or disabled dependents, and integrate the value of care work in economic reporting with mandatory gender impact assessment to verify equitable implementation;

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the Twentieth Day of September, in the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Five.

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

Original Version

The resolution aims to accelerate investment in care work, support the professionalisation of caregivers, foster innovation in care systems, and strengthen cross-ASEAN and community collaboration, all to alleviate the acute and inequitable burden currently borne by women.

Across Asia and the Pacific, women undertake 4.1 times more unpaid care work than men, cumulatively accounting for 16.4 billion hours daily, equivalent to 2 billion full-time jobs worth an estimated 9 percent of global GDP (approximately US$11 trillion). Within ASEAN, women spend between 3 hours 18 minutes to 4 hours 36 minutes per day on unpaid care, three times the duration reported for men. Globally, the gender care gap is narrowing by just 7 minutes per day. At this pace, gender parity would take more than 200 years[1].

This imbalance has real-world consequences: pervasive time poverty restricts women's participation in formal labour markets; many are pushed into part-time, informal, or precarious work with inadequate wages, benefits, or social protection. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this crisis, in which 30 percent of ASEAN women reported increased domestic workloads, compared with 16 percent of men reinforcing the so-called "double burden" of paid and unpaid labour. In Malaysia, women spend an average 3.6 hours daily on unpaid care, 1.4 hours more than men resulting in lower labour force participation and income disparities.

Despite ASEAN's 2021 adoption of a Comprehensive Framework on the Care Economy[2], regional implementation remains fragmented, and many challenges endure. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), doubling investment in care sectors education, health, and social work could create 269 million new jobs

[1] The Unpaid Care Crisis in Asia Pacific: A Call to Action for the Private Sector
https://www.lead-women.com/98039-2

[2] Asean Reaffirms Commitment Address Woman's Unpaid Care and Domestic Work During Launch New UN Report
https://www.unescap.org/news/asean-reaffirms-commitment-address-womens-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-during-launch-new-un

globally by 2030, while supporting SDG targets. Nevertheless, key innovations remain underutilised: digital technologies in care delivery, green and community-based care infrastructures, rural and intergenerational care models, mental health support for caregivers, social entrepreneurship, and fiscal measures to recognise care's contribution in national GDP and tax systems.

ASEAN also faces rapid demographic shifts an ageing population, and increasing climate-related disruptions, intensifying care needs and further straining fragile informal systems. Informal care workers, often women, migrants and domestic workers, frequently work under precarious conditions and lack social protections.

By aligning legal reforms, gender-responsive budgeting, time-use data collection, caregiving professionalisation, cross-border cooperation, public-private collaboration, and community engagement, this resolution addresses the structural inequities highlighted in the preamble. It redefines care from a private obligation into a strategic public good, foundational to gender equality, economic inclusion, decent work, and social justice throughout ASEAN.