



**THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE 42nd ASEAN INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA) GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
International Convention Centre
Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam
23rd – 25th August 2021



Theme: Forging Parliamentary Cooperation in Digital Inclusion towards ASEAN Community 2025

**CONCEPT NOTE FOR RESOLUTION ON ENHANCING CYBERSECURITY AND DATA
PROTECTION TOWARDS A RESILIENT CYBERSPACE IN ASEAN**
(Proposed by Brunei Darussalam)

Internet usage in Southeast Asia continues to increase, with 400 million internet users in 2020, of which 40 million are new users. Despite the economic impacts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is already evident that the pandemic itself has brought about permanent and massive digital adoption, with more than 1 in 3 digital services consumers being new to the service. E-Commerce, Online Media and Food Delivery adoption and usage have surged in 2020, while Transport and Online Travel have suffered significant challenges. Ultimately, the net effect is that the Internet sector will remain resilient and is poised to grow to over US \$300 Billion Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) by 2025 (Google, Temasek and Bain, 2020). The crisis will also boost Digital Financial Services (DFS), as consumers and SMEs become more receptive to online transactions.

The continued growth of ASEAN's digital economy will in turn create significant employment opportunities for its people, spur innovation and allow businesses to grow. However, this growth needs to be safeguarded by holistic cybersecurity efforts that can keep up with the speed at which ASEAN develops itself. Thus, as the digital economy grows in scale and complexity, cybersecurity becomes even more important in order to provide assurance and confidence in the digital technologies.

At present, ASEAN's commitment to strengthening cybersecurity is manifested through various ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) and the ASEAN Telecommunications Ministers Meeting (TELMIN). The ASEAN Leaders' Statement on Cybersecurity Cooperation, adopted on the occasion of the 32nd ASEAN Summit in 2018 in Singapore, shares ASEAN's vision of "a peaceful, secure and resilient regional cyberspace that serves as an enabler of economic progress, enhanced regional connectivity and betterment of living standards for all." The ASEAN Framework on Personal Data Protection, adopted at the 16th TELMIN on 25 November 2016, while non-binding, states the ASEAN Member States' intention to "cooperate, promote, and implement the Principles of Personal Data Protection in their domestic laws and regulations." Additionally, a number of capacity-building centres in the field of cybersecurity such as the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCC BC) in Thailand and the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) in Singapore have also been set up to further this cause.

However, despite significant progress made in recent years, ASEAN continues to encounter challenges related to cybersecurity and data protection; and cybersecurity concerns as well as cyber threats such as malware, phishing and ransomware, could hamper the region's digital economy and digital innovation agenda. Other challenges include a lack of expertise, as the cybersecurity industry faces shortages of home-grown capabilities and expertise (Kearney, n.d.). The evolving nature of the cyber ecosystem also makes responding to cyber threats more complicated. As such, ASEAN must continue to ramp up efforts to strengthen cybersecurity to fully tap into the opportunities in the digital economy.

This resolution therefore enjoins AIPA Member Parliaments to call upon ASEAN governments to continue to strengthen cybersecurity measures through various existing ASEAN-led mechanisms and instruments related to cybersecurity and data protection to increase awareness and preparedness. It also encourages ASEAN Member States to leverage on existing centres such as the AJCC BC and the ASCCE to enhance its capacity-building measures. Additionally, this resolution urges ASEAN Member States to strengthen cooperation related to cybersecurity and data protection within the ASEAN region and between ASEAN and its partners through the facilitation of more exchanges, information sharing as well as Information and Technology infrastructure development; and to strengthen the capabilities of their respective Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) through joint regional activities to enhance cooperation and collaboration in the areas of cybersecurity and data protection. It also recommends AIPA Member Parliaments to strengthen the relevant national policies and legal frameworks related to cybersecurity and data protection where practicable.