



**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KAGAWARAN NG KAPALIGIRAN AT LIKAS YAMAN**



MEMORANDUM

FOR/TO : **The Executive Director**
National Water Resources Board

The Directors
Biodiversity Management Bureau
Environmental Management Bureau
Forest Management Bureau
Climate Change Service

FROM : **The Undersecretary**
Policy, Planning and International Affairs

SUBJECT : **REQUEST FOR INPUTS ON THE PHILIPPINE
PRIORITIES FOR ASEAN 2023-2024**

DATE : JAN 12 2024

This pertains to the letter from DFA Office of ASEAN Affairs dated 03 January 2024 regarding the 35th ASEAN Matters Technical Board (AMTB) Meeting on 12 January 2024. In their letter, they requested for inputs on the Philippine Priorities for ASEAN from 2023-2024.

In view of the above, may we kindly request your inputs on the attached matrix. We would also like to seek your comments on including the following priorities, from the previous submission of the DENR:

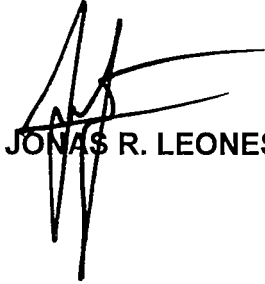
- Promote the role of ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity as the Center of Excellence in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- Enhance cooperation through collaborative actions among ASEAN Member States and partners to combat plastic pollution and prevent and significantly reduce marine plastic debris, particularly from land-based activities through the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Combatting Marine Debris in ASEAN Region and the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris.
- Promote cooperation on forestry, particularly on reducing deforestation and forest degradation, combating illegal trade of timber, and developing adaptive capacities of forest communities to cope with environmental hazards caused by climate change.
- Support efforts on water resources management, by advocating for a more effective and integrated management of fresh water resources that promote the balance between economic development and water sustainability.

*Cc: Office of the Asec
PPFASP*

The above matter will be tackled during the 35th AMTB on 12 January 2024. We would appreciate receiving your inputs on or before 11 January 2023.

For your information and appropriate action, please.

ATTY. JONAS R. LEONES

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, stylized strokes that form a unique, somewhat abstract representation of the name Jonas R. Leones.



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
KAGAWARAN NG UGNAYANG PANLABAS

OFFICE OF ASEAN AFFAIRS

EXTREMELY URGENT

Our Ref. No. : DIV1-001-ASEAN-2024
Subject : **Invitation to the 35th ASEAN Technical Matters Board (AMTB) , 12 January 2024**
Date : 03 January 2024

Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

Further to our invitation letter, DIV1-414-ASEAN-2023, dated 21 December 2023 for the Workshop on the Development of the Strategic Plans for the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 (ACV 2045), the Department respectfully informs your good office that the Workshop will now be part of the **35th ASEAN Matters Technical Board (AMTB) Meeting**.

In this regard, the Department is pleased to invite you to the **35th ASEAN Matters Technical Board (AMTB) Meeting to be held on 12 January 2024** (Friday), 0900H-1700H at the Bulwagang Elpidio Quirino, 14th Floor, DFA Main Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

Discussions during the AMTB will include the Workshop on the Development of the Strategic Plans for the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 (ACV 2045), as well as the Philippines' priorities in ASEAN vis-a-vis Lao PDR's priorities as Chair of ASEAN for 2024, recent developments in the ASEAN Community Pillars and ASEAN's External Partners, among others.

In this regard, the Department invites agencies to send one (1) official from your respective Offices, preferably at the Director-level to attend the upcoming AMTB Meeting on Friday, 12 January 2024.

Nominated representatives are requested to accomplish the same online registration form linked below **on or before 05 January 2024**. Those who have already accomplished the form before this letter will be allowed to edit their responses as needed, but otherwise noted already:

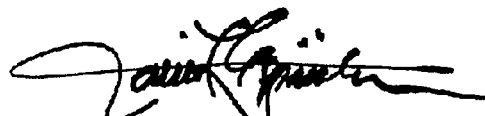
<https://forms.gle/kpHfS8dgggWnfUi38>

In addition, the Department respectfully requests your agencies' inputs and updates, if any, to the attached Philippine' priorities for 2023-2024. Agencies are requested to submit their inputs on or before **9 January 2024, Tuesday**, to asean.div1@dfa.gov.ph.

The provisional agenda, tentative program, administrative note, and other related documents will be circulated in due course. Should you require further information, kindly direct all queries to Ms. Avelyn Domingo at +63(2) 8834-3522 and/or asean.div1@dfa.gov.ph.

Thank you very much for your continued support and we look forward to your active participation. With best wishes for the new year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel R. Espiritu', written in a cursive style.

DANIEL R. ESPIRITU
Assistant Secretary

DISTRIBUTION LIST ATTACHED.

Attachment/s: As stated.



Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs <ouppia@denr.gov.ph>

[EXTREMELY URGENT] DIV1-001-ASEAN-2024 Invitation to the 35th ASEAN Technical Matters Board (AMTB), 12 January 2024

Office ASEAN <asean@dfa.gov.ph>

Wed, Jan 3, 2024 at 11:50 AM

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Cc: Div1 ASEAN <asean.div1@dfa.gov.ph>

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

Attached is a letter from Assistant Secretary Daniel R. Espiritu on the above subject, along with its attachments.




Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Thank you and best regards.



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3 attachments

-  **DIV1-001-ASEAN-2023 Invitation to the 35th AMTB Meeting and Workshop on the Strategic Plans for the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 (ACV 2045).pdf**
156K
-  **Distribution List for the 35th AMTB Meeting.pdf**
176K
-  **Philippine Priorities in ASEAN for 2023-2024.docx**
21K

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PHILIPPINES PRIORITIES IN ASEAN FOR 2023-2024

The Philippines remains committed to working with fellow ASEAN Member States towards realizing the priorities of Indonesia as ASEAN Chair this year, including the preparations for the development of ASEAN's Community Post-2025 Vision.

While the Philippines continues to pursue the above priorities where possible, response to the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to recover from it have been at the forefront of ASEAN's work since 2020.

The Philippines, as identified and vetted various agencies and stakeholders, has set out the following as its priorities in ASEAN for 2023-2024:

Philippine Political-Security Priorities

- Ensure regional peace, stability, security, and prosperity
 - Maintain ASEAN Centrality in shaping the regional architecture
 - Promote regionalism and multilateralism
 - Manage Potential Flashpoints in the region (e.g., South China Sea, Korean Peninsula, situation in Myanmar, etc.) as well as traditional and non-traditional threats. Promote ASEAN as a voice of moderation amidst geopolitical tensions and current global dynamics such as the rise of protectionism
- Terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalization
- Defense cooperation
 - Confidence-building measures
 - Joint exercises
- Maritime security and cooperation
 - Code of Conduct in the South China Sea
 - Upholding the 1982 UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award
 - Promoting maritime safety
 - Upholding freedom of navigation and overflight
- Combating Transnational Crimes
 - Trafficking in Persons
 - Illicit Drugs
 - Cybersecurity and an open, secure, stable, accessible, interoperable and peaceful cyberspace
 - Illegal wildlife trafficking
- Countering Terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalization
 - CBRN threats
- Border Management
- Promotion and protection of human rights
 - On the situation in Myanmar, follow and implement the Five-Point Consensus to promote regional human rights framework in accordance with the ASEAN Charter

- Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS)
- Philippines to build support for its candidature to the UN Security Council for the term 2027-2028 through the regional and inter-regional support, collective action, and shared values and priorities
- Strengthen the decision-making process of ASEAN (ie minilateral mechanisms)

Philippine Economic Cooperation Priorities

- Enhancing ASEAN Centrality and engagement with external ASEAN partners through Free Trade Agreements
 - Trade facilitation through implementation of free trade agreements (FTAs)
 - Timely conclusion of ASEAN-Canada FTA (ACAFTA) Negotiations
 - Signing of the 2nd Protocol to amend the AANZFTA
 - Progress negotiations for Upgrade Negotiations of the ASEAN-China FTA (ACFTA) and the ASEAN Trade
 - Financial Services Liberalization under ASEAN-Canada FTA (ACAFTA), and ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement
 - Green Finance
- Trade Facilitation, Trade and Investment Promotion, Consumer Protection, Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMEs).
 - Enhance access to finance and technology to further support MSMEs considering their impact on an role in spearheading growth in the domestic, regional, and global economy
- Encourage the signing and implementation of various AEC Agreements:
 - ASEAN Sectoral MRA for Building and Construction Materials
 - ASEAN Framework Agreement on Mutual Recognition Arrangements
 - ASEAN Food Safety Regulatory Framework Agreement
 - Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Sectoral Mutual Recognition Arrangement for the Good Manufacturing Practice Inspection of Manufacturers of Medicinal Products
 - ASEAN Agreement on Regulatory Framework for Traditional Medicines and the ASEAN Agreement on Regulatory Framework for Health Supplements
- Private sector participation
- Consumer protection
- Supply chain resilience
- Food security
 - Promote consumption of local agricultural products to benefit local farmers and reduce dependence on importation, resulting in sustainable production and consumption
 - Urgent need to strengthen food security in the region to bring attention to all related stakeholders to enhance collaboration, particularly in ensuring sustainable and nature-positive production

- Draft Discussion Paper on the Use of Military Assets to Maintain Food Security in the Region, which intends to raise awareness on future disruptive phenomena that could cause food insecurity in the region and set-out a holistic approach to further develop the deployment of military assets toward food security
- Aquaculture production
- Maritime Cooperation
 - Enhance production, distribution, and market access for fisheries and aquaculture
 - Assist small-scale fisheries
- Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Digitalization and Cybersecurity;
 - Initiative on e-healthcare and health tourism service
 - ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA)
 - Science and technology cooperation, and promoting an innovation-led economy
- Financial Integration
 - Capacity building on sustainable financing (i.e. ecosystem finance system, sustainable finance roadmap)
 - Financial market stability
 - Financial inclusion
 - Climate, infrastructure, and disaster finance
- Energy Cooperation
 - Increasing the use of renewable energy such as hydropower, geothermal, solar, wind and ocean energy
 - Mainstreaming energy efficiency and conservation as a way of life
 - Adoption of alternative and other emerging technologies
 - Development of resilient infrastructure
 - Energy efficiency and conservation
 - Low-carbon energy
 - Sustainable energy transition
 - Energy efficiency and conservation
 - Low-carbon energy
 - Provide reasonably-priced and reliable energy by taking advantage of all the best technologies available and being developed
 - Re-examine the government's strategy toward building nuclear power plants in the country and comply with international regulations
 - Enhance disaster resilience
- Infrastructure and Transport Connectivity
 - Transport Connectivity
 - Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC)
 - Sustainable transport, capacity building training on transport
- Mutual recognition arrangements for labor mobility in the region
- Promote Tourism
 - Expansion under connectivity in seamless travel

- Creative Industries
 - Seek support from other AMS on the establishment of the ASEAN Creative Economy Working Group
- Blue economy
- Green economy
- Bio, circular, green economy
- Green ports, renewable energy such as solar, digitalization of processing of permits in doing business
- Flight crew licensing
- Development of the Electric Vehicle Ecosystem
- Promote environmental, social, and governance (ESG) politics to facilitate sustainable growth in the region
- Adoption of the ASEAN Pharmaceutical Regulatory Policy (APRP), a collaborative initiative between health sector and economic pillar that will provide direction and policy framework in the development of harmonized strategies that facilitate the enhancement of national regulatory systems and market integration initiatives
- ASEAN Smart Cities Network
- ASEAN Innovation Roadmap 2019-2025

Philippine Socio-Cultural Cooperation Priorities

The Philippines aim to strengthen socio-cultural cooperation by continuing the following activities and programs in 2022:

- Migrant workers
 - Action plan for the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers;
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management;
 - Enhancing national capacities
 - Building resilient communities
 - Participate in the ADMM-Plus EWG on HADR which is co-chaired by Indonesia and India for 2021-2024 cycle. Support initiatives to strengthen the capability of ASEAN Member states to mobilize resources in disaster-affected areas.
- Climate Change and Environment Protection and sustainability
 - Support for Nationally Determined Contributions
 - Climate finance
 - Accountability for carbon footprint and other issues related to climate change, biodiversity loss, and the environment protection
- Biodiversity conservation and management
 - Biodiversity climate change nexus, science- and evidence-based policymaking and implementation
 - Whole-of-community approach to sustainable conservation and use of biodiversity and ecosystem services
 - Nature-based solutions to address biodiversity loss and mitigate climate change

- Prioritize actions that recognize the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment
- Strengthen synergies among multilateral environmental agreements to which the Philippines is a State Party
- Modern biotechnology including synthetic biology
- Multi-dimensional package of resource mobilization, including mainstreaming and elimination of harmful subsidies and incentives
- Recognition of the rights of indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) over lands, territories, waters, resources, as well as those in livelihood programmes of IPLCs situated in ASEAN Heritage Parks and Protected Areas
- Promote sustainable products and services that enhance biodiversity, and apply agro-ecological and nature-positive principles
- Human Capital Development;
 - Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
 - Education cooperation/Higher Education Common Space in Southeast Asia
- Mainstreaming of Vulnerable Groups
 - Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, ethnic and racial minorities, refugees and migrants, older persons, among others
- Social Welfare and Development
 - Social protection
 - Strengthening Social Protection, Strengthening the Role of Social Work in Allied Sectors, Mainstreaming the Enabling Masterplan 2025 for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disability
- Public Health
 - Promotion of good nutrition and health sustainable diets
 - Combat antimicrobial resistance
- Raise awareness about ASEAN
- Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation.
- Maritime cooperation and marine environment sustainability
- Countering misinformation, disinformation, and fake news
- Philippines is the lead in Gender Mainstreaming* in all three pillars
 - Implementation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework
- Inclusive, safe, and responsive labor markets
 - Pursue an integrated, cross-sectoral, strategic and programmatic approach to labor cooperation toward digitized, inclusive and sustainable recovery and growth on matters such as digitalization, modernized agriculture, and efficient HRD in the world of work
 - Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of labor inspection in the post-pandemic future of work through the ASEAN Labour Inspection Committee Work Plan 2022-2030

- Enhancing ASEAN Centrality, including under ASEAN-led mechanisms such as EAS, ADMM-Plus, ARF, APT
- Mainstreaming the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) priority areas of cooperation
 - Draft Concept Paper on the Implementation of the AOIP from a Defense Perspective, with focus on the following areas: peaceful settlement of disputes, cooperation to strengthen and practice practical confidence-building measures in maritime and air domains, and promoting safety and security and freedom of navigation and overflight.
- Promoting maritime cooperation
- Identify and propose initiatives with external ASEAN partners in support of Philippine priorities
- Country Coordinator of ASEAN-EU relations

Other Cross-Pillar Issues

- High Level Task Force on ASEAN Community Vision Post-2025 (HLTF-ACV) recommendations on strengthening ASEAN's capacity and institutional effectiveness. Complement ASEAN Community Vision Post-2025 to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the following:
 - People-centered approach towards promoting sustainable development, reducing poverty, and protecting the environment.
 - Promote regional integration and connectivity, and emphasize the importance of infrastructure development, connectivity, and trade as drivers of economic growth and development.
 - Regional cooperation and collaboration.
 - Inclusive and sustainable development, with a focus on leaving no one behind.
 - Environmental sustainability and the need to address climate change.
- Strengthening ASEAN decision-making process
- Supporting the ASEAN Secretariat, including in its analysis and monitoring function and its ability to support ASEAN Member States
- Dissolving the Joint Consultative Meeting
- Timor-Leste's full membership in ASEAN
 - Developing an objective criteria-based Roadmap for Timor-Leste's Membership in ASEAN.
 - Provision of capacity-building activities for Timor-Leste.
 - Draft Guidelines for the Implementation of the Observer Status Granted to Timor-Leste in the ADMM, ADMM-Plus, and its Related Meetings, which provides a set of objectives, guiding principles, and procedures for engaging Timor-Leste in the ASEAN defense sector.
- Follow-up on the EAS Statement on Mental Health Cooperation to encourage regional and international cooperation on mental health

Philippine COVID-19 Related Priorities

The Philippines in ASEAN is pursuing the following priorities in addressing COVID-19:

- Support expediting of COVID-19 response efforts through the COVID-19

ASEAN Response Fund (CARF)

- Use of a portion of the CARF for research and capacity building activities to prepare against future public health emergencies
- Establish mechanisms and strengthen existing programs for the early detection and control of zoonotic transfers
- Continued support and commitment to the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and need for whole-of-Community approach to ensure inclusive and sustained regional recovery
- Encourage the deepening public private partnership between ASEAN and ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC)
- Boost production and facilitate intra-ASEAN trade
- Fast-track the operationalization of the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (ASEAN RRMS). Encourage AMS to contribute to and tap the earmarked contributions in the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for public Health Emergencies or RRMS
- Task the Ad Hoc Task Force of the ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF)
- Address the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on environmental, biodiversity, and climate-related changes
- Address and mitigate the impact of emerging challenges arising from pandemic, and current geopolitical tension, on food security and energy resiliency, with a view to strengthening economic recovery and improving the resilience of the region.
- Enhanced cooperation on Advancing the Achievements of ASEAN Health Development, which include enhanced cooperation initiatives on building regional health system resilience and accelerating COVID-19 recovery
- Optimize the mobilization of essential health resources to respond to public health crises
- Promote One Health Approach to prepare and respond to pandemics
- Strengthen health systems for sustainable universal health coverage
- Health security for resilient health systems
- Strengthening implementation of interventions for the prevention and control of infectious diseases
