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**THE 34th GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**17th  - 23rd SEPTEMBER 2013**

**RES.34GA/2013/ ECO/01**

**RESOLUTION ON**

**FOSTERING THE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SME**

***The Thirty-Fourth AIPA General Assembly:***

***Recognising*** the crucial role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as main drivers of the ASEAN economy, responsible for employment generation, delivering technology, innovation, poverty reduction, as well as empowering youth and women in the region through business participation;

***Recalling*** AIPA Resolution 33GA/2012/ECO/04 on Better Access to Technology, Market and Especially Financing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), adopted in Lombok, Indonesia, in 2012;

***Encouraged*** by the Chairman’s Statement of the 22nd ASEAN Summit that was issued in Brunei Darussalam on the 25th April 2013, including the Leader’s call to foster Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);

***Recalling*** the 45th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting Joint Statement issued in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, on 19 August 2013, which called further establishment of the national SME development funds and enhancement of SME access to finance;

***Aware*** that SME development continues to face an array of challenges, most saliently the limited access to finance, technology, innovation, markets to address human capital constraints;

***Recognising*** past and ongoing efforts within ASEAN in actively developing SMEs to become effectual key drivers in the establishment of a sustainable regional economic system, as exemplified through the ASEAN SME Regional Development Fund under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint, the ASEAN Policy Blueprint for SME Development 2004-2014 (APBSD), and the Strategic Action Plan for SME Development 2010-2015;

***Desiring*** to foster the development of SMEs in order to elevate their capabilities in competing in both regional and global markets, thereby stimulating regional economic growth;

***Hereby resolves to:***

***Encourage*** their respective governments to continue their commitment in facilitating SME development by providing the necessary infrastructure and resources for a conducive environment for SME growth, through the strengthening of existing policies, institutional framework, as well as support mechanisms geared at improving SMEs’ access to markets and key resources, establishing underwriting credit funds by government and also private sectors for SMEs which will enhance SMEs competitiveness and resilience in pursuing opportunities in the face of regional and global economic uncertainties;

***Support*** the development of an ASEAN Business Travel Card, as agreed by the ASEAN Leaders at the 22nd ASEAN Summit, and as a symbolic and pragmatic step towards enhancing trade and investment among SMEs in the region;

***Call on*** their respective governments to continue their efforts in lending support to intra-ASEAN efforts in SME development, and to extend their fullest cooperation within and between ASEAN and international financial institution partners towards the successful establishment of the ASEAN SME Regional Development Fund as an effective regional financing infrastructure that will contribute to narrowing the development gap between ASEAN Member States;

***Provide*** government support, where necessary, to equip SMEs with better access to financing, including through the establishment of National SMEs Development Funds;

***Convince*** the ASEAN Member States to develop a strategic regional platform for long-term SME development and cooperation that will foster SME involvement in regional and international markets with the aim of enabling SMEs to graduate into larger enterprises;

***Promote*** the empowerment of the youth and women within the ASEAN region by supporting measures that would nurture an entrepreneurial culture at the national level, through means such as advisory support and capacity programmes.

Adopted on the 22nd day of September 2013 during the 34th AIPA General Assembly in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.