



ASEAN: One Community, One Destiny.

Cambodia 2012

ASEAN'S CONCEPT PAPER ON GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF MODERATES

INTRODUCTION

1. The Prime Minister of Malaysia first mooted the idea of establishing a Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) when he delivered his maiden speech at the 65th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 27 September 2010. Since then, the initiative has garnered support from many world leaders. At the recently concluded 18th ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, the Leaders in the Chairman's Statement on 8 May 2011 have welcomed the initiative to establish the GMM as one of ASEAN's positive contributions in shaping global developments. The leaders have now tasked the ASEAN Secretariat to produce a concept paper on how ASEAN can promote this idea at the global level.

OBJECTIVE

2. The objective of this paper is to explain the overall concept of GMM and explore the necessary approaches that would assist in promoting the idea and ensuring its success at the global level through the relevant ASEAN mechanisms with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat.

GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF MODERATES

The Concept

3. GMM is an approach on how to address extremism. Essentially, it calls on the voices of moderation to drown the voices of extremism. There is an urgent need for

moderates to reclaim the centre and moral high ground. The voices of moderation should be from all religious beliefs and faiths, committed to working together to combat and hence marginalize extremists. However, the concept is not confined to religion alone, but encompasses all aspects of interfaith, intercultural and inter-civilisational relations. In other words, the concept aims to address all forms of political extremism, including religious extremism, ultra-nationalism and radicalism.

4. GMM should support the commitment to promote democratic values. Strong support of ASEAN Member States, the progress of democracy among ASEAN Member States and their commitment to democratic values will foster cooperation among them in addressing extremism. Adherence to social justice and good governance are also ways to address the root causes of extremism.

5. GMM is a new and important initiative. It could complement other initiatives such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. At the same time, we should learn from other initiatives such as “Enlightened Moderation” by Pakistan, the Inter-civilisational Dialogue by Iran, and the Interfaith Dialogue by Indonesia.

6. GMM is to be promoted through the existing mechanisms within the ASEAN Member States aimed at achieving global peace. The GMM concept could be explained as follows:

- Embracing ‘moderation’ is an important ASEAN value. Moderation comes with a high degree of tolerance, trust and mutual understanding as well as places dialogue as an important tool to resolve disputes which is the fundamental principle of how ASEAN was first founded in 1967 and successfully practised among ASEAN Member States. Undoubtedly, this value has contributed to the relative peace and harmony experienced by the region until today. Along with ensured political and economic stability, it has contributed to the high level of economic growth and development in the region.

- The practice of moderation in ASEAN should not just be confined to religion alone but should be all encompassing to include other areas such as the economics, politics, culture and social dimensions. Awareness as well as programmes to promote the values of moderation to ASEAN citizens could easily be made through the 3 (three) ASEAN Community pillars namely the ASEAN Political and Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Reference can be made to action point A.1.9 of the APSC Blueprint which refers to the promotion of peace and stability in the region and action point E.1 of the ASCC Blueprint which refers to the promotion of ASEAN awareness and a sense of community.
- Moderation also includes the importance of engaging in dialogue on political, economic and socio-cultural issues.

7. ASEAN is primed to promote GMM due to its multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural background where diversity can be used as a source of its strength. This is evident in the positive interaction and synergy between peoples of the Southeast Asia region, which has contributed to the success of what ASEAN is today. As such ASEAN can utilise the idea of GMM as part of its current agenda to raise this particular ASEAN value – the practice of moderation – at the international level. After all, the composition of the global village is similar to ASEAN, particularly in terms of ethnic, culture, social and religion. If embracing and practicing moderation has worked for ASEAN, it is not impossible for it to work in the global village. If all sectors of the global village namely: governments, civil society, mass media, inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations, could embrace, adopt and practice moderation in their actions, policies and way of life, then achieving peace and harmony in the world is very possible. Those who believe and support moderation could then move in concert to encourage others to embrace this value. The movement of moderates is therefore an important approach that ASEAN could contribute to the world in achieving global peace.

Approach

8. Promoting GMM would have to be undertaken at three (3) different levels i.e. at the national, regional and international levels. This has to be done simultaneously. There cannot be 'a one glove fits all' type of approach. There is a need to apply different strategies to different audiences and at different levels.

9. In order to move GMM forward, the following approaches could be undertaken:

9.1 At the national level:

9.1.1 **Convene National Symposiums** – Each ASEAN Member State to convene their own respective symposiums in which their own citizens from all walks of society, including civil society organisations, could be invited to attend and interact with prominent speakers as well as personalities where discussions would ensue after a brief presentation is made. There should be a series of forums, the first of which would be in Malaysia organized by the Razak School of Government. A time-table to be drawn up with the symposiums to be hosted annually by other ASEAN Member States.

9.1.2 Encourage all ASEAN Member States to organise official celebrations of international events such as the World Interfaith Harmony Week in country. Civil society organisations in each ASEAN Member States can also be encouraged to do the same.

9.1.3 Convening community outreach programmes/cross-cultural roundtables/ community engagement programmes, and rehabilitation programmes can also be encouraged.

9.2 At the regional level:

- 9.2.1 Establish a special ASEAN unit handling only GMM issues -This Unit will serve as the secretariat, staffed by selected MFA officers from appointed representatives from ASEAN Member States. The Unit will be tasked to initiate, promote, coordinate, monitor respond, and evaluate all GMM related activities within ASEAN and globally. This unit should also collaborate closely with organisations and institutions in ASEAN Member States involved in promoting moderation.
- 9.2.2 Establish an ASEAN online space for voices of ‘moderates’—Make use of the popular mediums of communication such as social networks, blogs, and other forms of new social media, to get feedback and support of the masses particularly the young generation on GMM. This portal could be established as part of the ASEAN Secretariat’s website. All communications on GMM should be monitored and responded by a specialised unit within the ASEAN Secretariat. Technology does and can play a role in becoming part of the solution, helping to engineer a turn away from violence and extremism and towards moderation. The use of social media would be able to assist in initiating a global conversation on preventing young people from becoming radicalised and how to de-radicalise others.
- 9.2.3 Explore the possibility of the ASEAN Foundation and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) to conduct seminars/workshops/trainings in promoting the voice of moderation. Promoting moderation should also be a permanent feature of the AIPR’s activities.
- 9.2.4 Establish an ASEAN academic space – Local universities and other academic institutions within ASEAN could organise GMM

related programmes and activities. They could also include international academicians in their programmes and activities. This should be considered as a second track initiative and is independent of the main process. Second track initiatives can also be encouraged to involve representatives from civil society and relevant groups in the region to participate and provide additional inputs.

9.2.5 Engage with the relevant sectoral bodies across the three ASEAN Community pillars, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, in exploring initiatives on, and in fighting extremism. The relevant sectoral bodies can for example consider programmes and projects in this area subject to the availability of resources.

9.2.6 Take the lead in sharing ASEAN Member State's experience of inter-faith and intra-faith consultative forums and other bridge-building initiatives among the faith communities at the regional level through seminars and workshops to reaffirm and rebuild crucial attitudes of respect, tolerance and acceptance. Community engagement and outreach programmes, cross-cultural roundtables and rehabilitation programmes on this issue could also be promoted.

9.2.7 ASEAN should also take the lead in stressing that extremism should not be associated with any culture, religion or civilisation. Taking into account that however, extremist ideologies have been perpetuated which have provided fertile ground for exploitation, ASEAN should stress the identification of national strategies that could promote greater tolerance amongst different cultures, religions and civilisations. This would play a useful and important role in ensuring that such extremist ideologies do not take root in society.

9.3 At the International level

- 9.3.1 Convene an International Lecture Series– The theme of the lecture should be related to GMM. Prominent speakers should be invited to deliver a speech at the lecture. Outstanding personalities could also be considered. Member States of ASEAN could take turn to host this Lecture Series. Since the GMM is initiated by Malaysia, the first lecture series could be undertaken by the Razak School of Government of Malaysia. Subsequent lecture series could be hosted by other schools of government or management of ASEAN Member States.
- 9.3.2 The role of the private sector should also be encouraged such as the role of ‘Google Ideas’ in launching a summit against violent extremism.
- 9.3.3 Promote the idea to countries in all regions –Utilise the ASEAN +1 and other regional meetings to promote the GMM. This can take the form of a reference to the GMM in the various Joint Statements. More concretely, this initiative should also be included in ASEAN’s functional cooperation programmes with the dialogue partners and in the context of regional meetings. For example, as education has been identified as one of the five priority areas in the EAS, GMM-related programmes can be included in this priority area. At the same time, the Chair of ASEAN could be tasked to undertake efforts to promote the GMM at the global level. Looking forward, ASEAN may wish to contemplate taking the initiative to the United Nations for consideration and adoption through the tabling of a Resolution. ASEAN Chapters in various capitals and multilateral posts could also be tasked to forward ideas on how to promote the GMM there.

- 9.3.4 Collaborate with Dialogue Partners, international organisations and other international parties to conduct seminars/workshops for the sharing of best practices and successful case studies of engagement and integration policies that have led to the voices of moderation to prevail.
- 9.3.5 Take cognizance of programmes on inter-faith dialogue at the international level, for example the NAM Ministerial Meeting on Inter-faith Dialogue and to consider how ASEAN programmes could complement programmes at the international level.
- 9.3.6 Recognition can also be given to the recommendations in the Manila Statement on ASEM Interfaith Dialogue on Migration to highlight how such programmes can bolster regional and international cooperation in addressing challenges associated with areas such migration.

10. A roadmap to promote GMM should also be drawn up to synchronize the activities at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that the necessary momentum is maintained. The roadmap should be drawn up as soon as possible by the GMM secretariat.

Conclusion

11. As the Leaders of ASEAN have adopted the Malaysian Prime Minister's clarion call to utilise the GMM as part of ASEAN's contribution to global peace in the 18th ASEAN Summit held on 8 May 2011 in Jakarta, time is of the essence. It is also important that the initiative moves forward without delay so as to take advantage of the interest it has generated with the global community and to ensure that those who have indicated their support would continue lending it.