

# What Does ASEAN Mean to ASEAN Peoples? Survey Findings from Myanmar\*

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## Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is moving towards integration and aims to establish the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2020, representing an important milestone in ASEAN economic cooperation. Integration contributes to narrowing the gaps in the disparities and imbalances between ASEAN member states. It is also critical for generating economic growth, improving the living standards of the people in the region, and achieving the overall development of the member states. Nevertheless, the success of regional integration will mainly depend on the willingness, commitment, and perceptions of the people in the region. Moreover, the institutional quality of the member states will play an important role in the harmonisation and integration processes towards the AEC.

In this study, questionnaires were created by ERIA, and a survey was carried out by the Department of Economics of the Yangon University of Economics from August to November 2016 in Yangon, Myanmar. The respondents were from the fields of education, business, youth, culture, civil society, small and medium-sized enterprises, and others. The number of initial respondents totalled 238, but 30 were deleted from the datasheet due to incomplete and inconsistent data. The analysis uses the remaining 208 respondents. Some respondents provided their email addresses, while others only gave their names.

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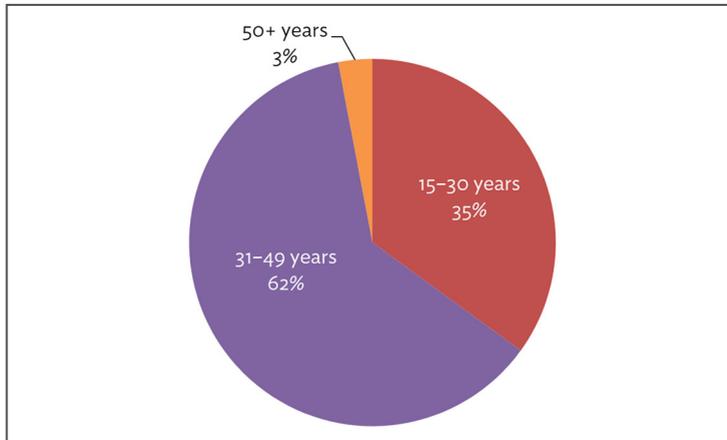
\* All tables and figures in this chapter were derived from the survey data.

# Survey Responses

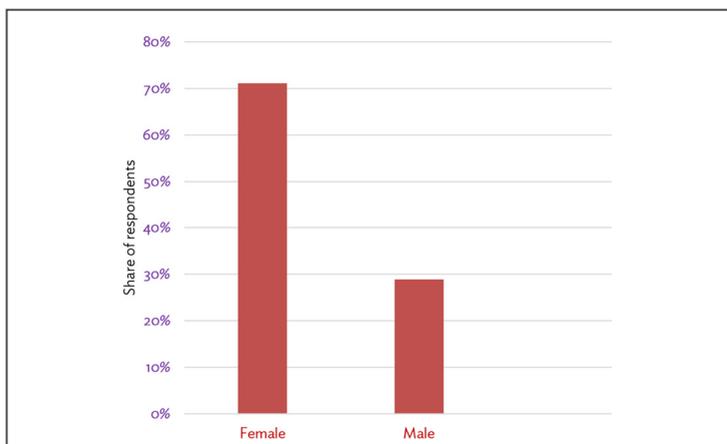
## Profile of the survey respondents

Figure 1 shows the age distribution of the respondents. Of the respondents, 35% were aged 15–30, 62% were aged 31–49, and the rest were aged 50 or older.

**Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents**



**Figure 2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents**

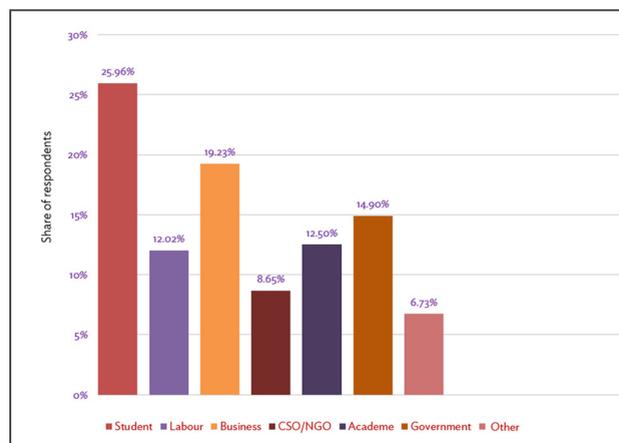


As shown in Figure 2, 71.15% of the survey respondents were female, and 28.85% were male. Thus, women were moderately overrepresented in the survey.

## Affiliations of the respondents

Of the survey respondents, 25.96% were students (Figure 3). The second-largest group comprised those from business (19.23%). Those from government represented 14.9% of the sample, while those from academia comprised 12.5%. Next were those from labour (12.02%), civil society organisations/non-governmental organisations (CSOs/NGOs) (8.65%), and others (6.73%).

**Figure 3: Affiliations of the Respondents**

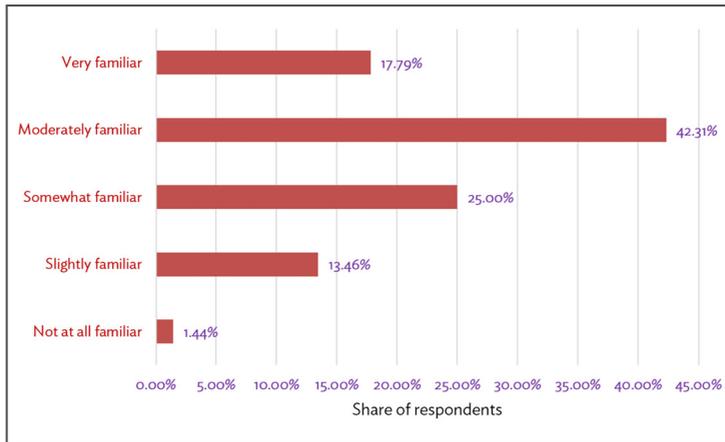


CSO = civil society organisation, NGO = non-governmental organisation.

## Awareness of ASEAN

Of the respondents, 42.31% were moderately familiar with ASEAN through various sources, such as newspapers, journals, broadcasts, and social media. Meanwhile, 25% were somewhat familiar, 17.79% were very familiar, 13.46% were slightly familiar, and 1.44% were not at all familiar with ASEAN (Figure 4). Discussions with the respondents revealed the main reasons they were familiar with ASEAN were because of the Southeast Asian Games that were held in Myanmar in late 2014 and Myanmar's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014. The respondents were also familiar with ASEAN from media, such as news articles, journals, and announcements on government websites regarding ASEAN's summits and meetings, its current situation and prospects, and the ASEAN Football Championship. Furthermore, the respondents working in NGOs and international NGOs answered that they had knowledge of ASEAN through their working environments.

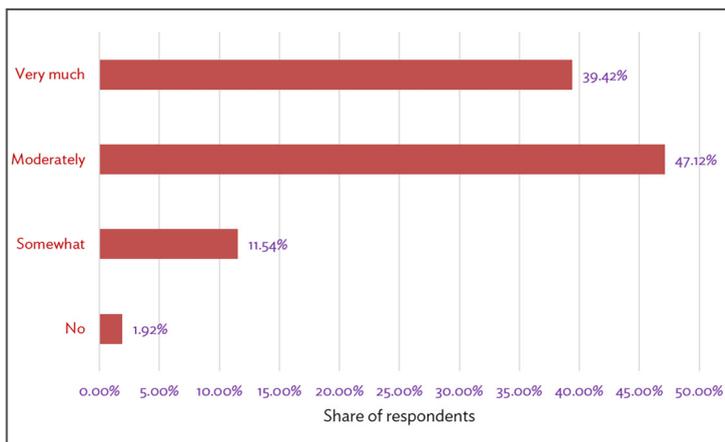
**Figure 4: Awareness of ASEAN**



## Feeling of being an ASEAN citizen

As shown in Figure 5, 39.42% of the respondents said they felt very much like ASEAN citizens, while 47.12% said they felt moderately as ASEAN citizens. This was followed by 11.54% who felt somewhat like ASEAN citizens and 1.92% who did not feel they were ASEAN citizens. Most respondents expressed having hopes and aspirations for being accepted as ASEAN citizens with equal rights and equal opportunities among ASEAN societies. Some of the respondents stated they felt Myanmar had better opportunities and accessibility in sectors as an ASEAN member when dealing with international societies.

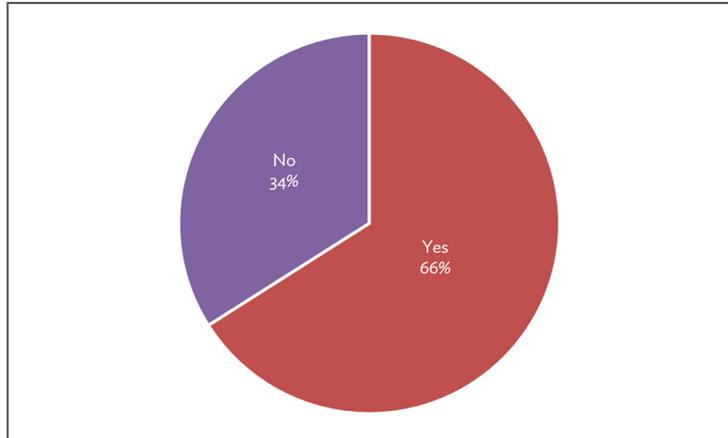
**Figure 5: Feeling of Being an ASEAN Citizen**



## Aspirations, expectations, concerns, and hopes for ASEAN

When asked whether they had aspirations, expectations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN, the majority, 66%, said they did, while 34% said they did not (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Aspirations, Expectations, Concerns, or Hopes for ASEAN**



There were many differences in the reasons for the respondents' aspirations, expectations, concerns, and hopes. Some respondents said they expected to get visas easier, have future job opportunities, or benefit from assistance and aid through equitable opportunities for people living in ASEAN. Respondents thought the regional integration of ASEAN would increase economic output not only within the region but also in other countries around the world because of the larger market for goods and services.

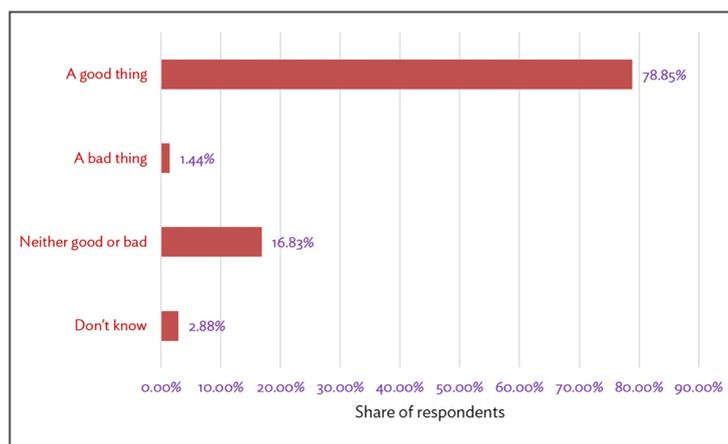
Some people said they expected to be united as one without discrimination and oppression, including in the less developed countries in ASEAN. They said that if ASEAN people were fully aware of the ASEAN Community and its progress, the community could strongly engage and benefit its people and enhance and increase the right to public participation. They expected more collaboration on economic and social activities through integration to assure advantages for the ASEAN Member States. They also said that through agreements on the ASEAN Free Trade Area, residents would have the opportunity to buy and sell products at proper prices and improve trade conditions, which would enhance the economic development of the region.

Some participants hoped that leaders and representatives would work together in the global environment to handle situations in their countries, in every aspect, more effectively and efficiently. To ensure a successful future for all ASEAN countries, economic development, such as through job creation and achieving a higher quality of living, and maintaining the peace and stability of the community cannot be neglected. Respondents highlighted the need to obtain equal rights in ASEAN countries for health, education, social and living standards, government salaries, technology, and economic growth, etc. Transportation by road, railway, sea, and air among ASEAN member countries must also be improved and become safer and easier. Most of the respondents hoped that ASEAN would lead all 10 member states to coexist with one another through peace and forgiveness. Some hoped for development and better rule of law practices for Myanmar and the building of peaceful and modernised countries throughout the region. Of the respondents, 34% had no aspirations, expectations, concerns, or hopes for ASEAN. Meanwhile, some worried about the awareness, knowledge, and challenges of establishing integration among the ASEAN Member States.

## Myanmar’s membership of ASEAN

Figure 7 illustrates the respondents’ thoughts on their country’s membership of ASEAN. Most of the residents (78.85%) thought it was good to be a member of ASEAN. Only 1.44% of the residents thought membership was bad, and 16.83% thought it was neither good nor bad. Meanwhile, 2.88% of the residents did not know whether Myanmar’s membership of ASEAN was good or bad.

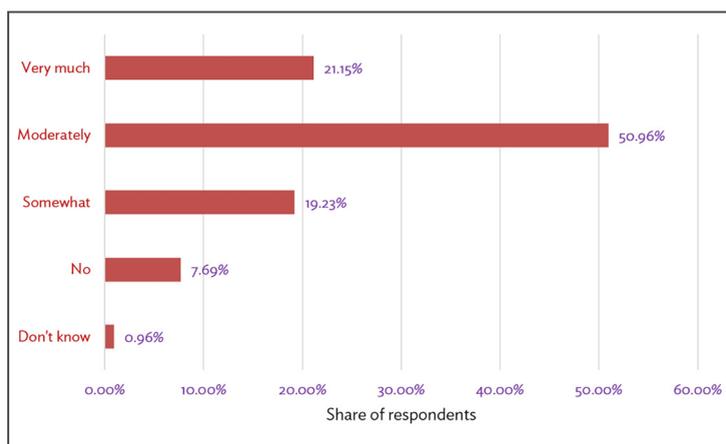
**Figure 7: What Do You Think of Your Country’s Membership in ASEAN?**



## Benefit from ASEAN membership

Figure 8 shows the opinions of the respondents on whether they thought Myanmar had benefited from being a member of ASEAN. As illustrated in the figure, 50.96% said there had been moderate benefits from being a member of ASEAN, 21.15% said membership had been very beneficial, and 19.23% said membership had been somewhat beneficial. Meanwhile, 7.69% stated there had been no benefit, and 0.96% said they did not know. The respondents stated that their country's citizens had benefited through visa exemptions for regional countries as a result of being a member of ASEAN.

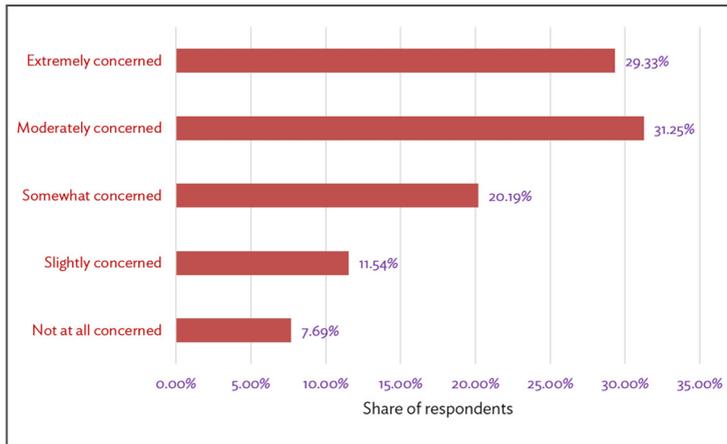
**Figure 8: Would You Say Your Country Has Benefited from Being a Member of ASEAN?**



## Concern if Myanmar were to leave ASEAN

Figure 9 shows the respondents' opinions on how they would feel if Myanmar were to leave ASEAN. Of the respondents, 31.25% said they would be moderately concerned, 29.33% said they would be extremely concerned, 7.69% replied they would not be at all concerned, 11.54% said they would be slightly concerned, and 20.19% said they would be somewhat concerned.

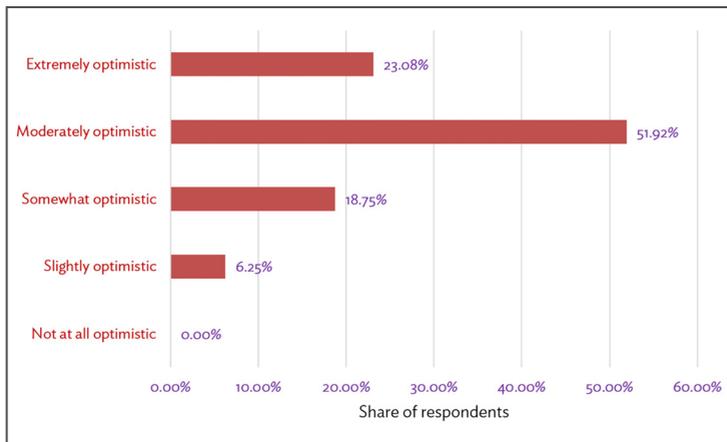
**Figure 9: How Would You Feel If Your Country Were to Leave ASEAN?**



## Optimism for the future of ASEAN

Among the 208 respondents, 23.08% said they were extremely optimistic about the future of ASEAN, while more than half of the participants, 51.92%, were moderately optimistic (Figure 10). Meanwhile, 18.75% were somewhat optimistic, and 6.25% were slightly optimistic. None of the respondents chose 'not at all optimistic'.

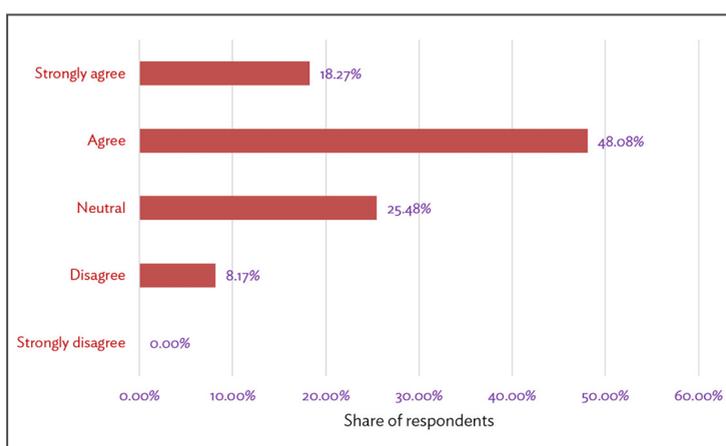
**Figure 10: Would You Say You Are Optimistic about the Future of ASEAN?**



## Media coverage of ASEAN

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: ‘The media (newspapers, radio, television, and online news) does not have enough coverage of ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges.’ Responses were given by 208 participants. Of these, 18.27% indicated strong agreement, 48.08% said they agreed, 25.48% were neutral, 8.17% said they disagreed, and none strongly disagreed with the statement (Figure 11). From these statistics, most respondents appeared to agree with the statement.

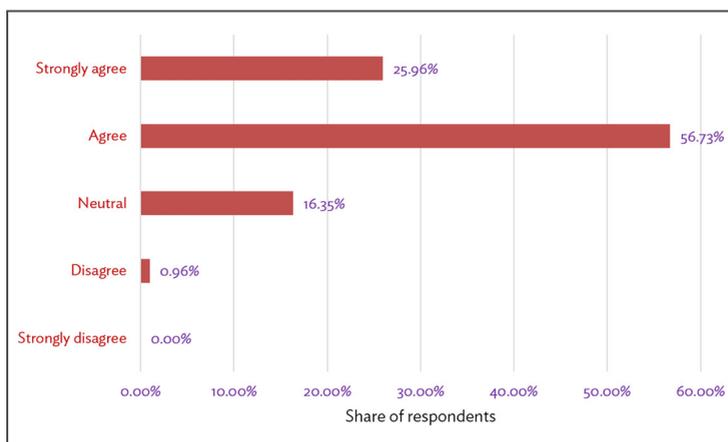
**Figure 11: The Media Does Not Have Enough Coverage of ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges**



## Using school textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN

The next question asked the survey participants whether they agreed or disagreed with using school textbooks to socialise and educate young people about ASEAN’s progress, achievements, and challenges. Of the 208 respondents, 25.96% strongly agreed, 56.73% agreed, 16.35% were neutral, and 0.96% disagreed (Figure 12). None of the respondents indicated strong disagreement.

**Figure 12: Do You Agree with Using School Textbooks to Socialise and Educate Young People about ASEAN’s Progress, Achievements, and Challenges?**



## Most pressing problems facing Myanmar today and until 2025

The next question asked respondents about pressing problems facing Myanmar today and until 2025 in three groups: economic issues, sociocultural issues, and governance and political issues. Eight problems were included under economic issues, nine problems under sociocultural issues, and four under governance and political issues. Among the 21 problems, each respondent was asked to choose the top five most pressing problems facing Myanmar today and until 2025. The results of the survey show the top five most challenging problems to be climate change and natural disasters; unemployment; poverty; agriculture and food security; and educational quality, provision, and access (Table 1).

## Most pressing problems facing the ASEAN Community and region today and until 2025

Next, the same 21 pressing problems were given to the respondents, but this time they were asked to choose the top five most pressing problems facing the ASEAN Community and region today and until 2025. The most frequently selected problems were climate change and natural disasters; income disparity and social inequality; human rights; agriculture and food security; and unemployment (Table 2).

By comparing the top five most pressing problems in Myanmar and in the ASEAN region, we can see three common issues: climate change and natural disasters, agriculture and food security, and unemployment. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were concerned about these three problems for both Myanmar and the ASEAN region.

**Table 1: Most Pressing Problems Facing Myanmar Today and until 2025**

Ranking	Type of Issue	Problem	Share of Respondents (%)
1	Sociocultural	Climate change and natural disasters	52.88
2	Sociocultural	Unemployment	48.08
3	Sociocultural	Poverty	43.75
4	Economic	Agriculture and food security	43.27
5	Sociocultural	Quality education provision and access	36.06
6	Economic	Infrastructure availability and quality	31.73
7	Sociocultural	Income disparity and social inequality	31.25
8	Governance and political	Corruption	28.37
9	Sociocultural	Poor natural resource management and biodiversity loss	27.40
10	Governance and political	Human rights	18.27
11	Sociocultural	Land use, water use, and access	17.79
12	Sociocultural	Quality health services provision and access	17.31
13	Governance and political	Governance	16.83
14	Economic	Access to high-quality, affordable financial services	15.87
15	Economic	Trade, investment, and regulatory coherence	15.87
16	Economic	Energy provision and price	14.90
17	Governance and political	Public participation in policymaking and program monitoring	10.58
18	Economic	Accessible Internet connections (in relation to the digital economy)	8.65
19	Economic	Non-tariff measures/non-tariff barriers	8.65
20	Economic	Customs efficiency	7.21
21	Sociocultural	Gender parity between men and women	5.77

**Table 2: Most Pressing Problems Facing ASEAN Today and until 2025**

Ranking	Type of Issue	Problem	Share of Respondents (%)
1	Sociocultural	Climate change and natural disasters	62.98
2	Sociocultural	Income disparity and social inequality	38.94
3	Governance and political	Human rights	34.13
4	Economic	Agriculture and food security	31.25
5	Sociocultural	Unemployment	30.29
6	Sociocultural	Poor natural resource management and biodiversity loss	28.85
7	Governance and political	Corruption	26.92
8	Economic	Trade, investment, and regulatory coherence	25.96
9	Sociocultural	Poverty	25.48
10	Sociocultural	Quality education provision and access	24.52
11	Economic	Access to high-quality, affordable financial services	22.12
12	Economic	Infrastructure availability and quality	21.63
13	Sociocultural	Land use, water use, and access	18.75
14	Governance and political	Governance	17.79
15	Economic	Non-tariff measures/non-tariff barriers	17.31
16	Sociocultural	Quality health services provision and access	16.35
17	Economic	Energy provision and price	15.87
18	Governance and political	Public participation in policymaking and program monitoring	15.87
19	Sociocultural	Gender parity between men and women	10.58
20	Economic	Customs efficiency	8.65
21	Economic	Accessible Internet connections (in relation to the digital economy)	5.29

## Aspirations and hopes by 2025

The respondents expressed their aspirations and hopes for the enhancement of ASEAN integration by 2025 by giving their opinions on the following 15 statements (Table 3). The six possible answers were ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’, and ‘don’t know’.

### **Statement 1: Consumers have easy access to goods and services from any ASEAN country.**

This statement shows the aspirations of consumers to have easy access to goods and services from ASEAN. The respondents hoped for the facilitated consumption of goods and services between ASEAN countries by 2025, shown by the answers of ‘strongly agree’ by 28.85%, ‘agree’ by 45.67%, ‘neutral’ by 16.3%, ‘disagree’ by 5.77%, and ‘strongly agree’ by 0.48%.

### **Statement 2: It is easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.**

Regarding the ease of skilled workers and professionals in finding work in other countries in ASEAN, 47.60% of the respondents answered ‘agree’, 28.85% answered ‘strongly agree’, 18.75% answered ‘neutral’, 3.85% answered ‘disagree’, and 0.48% stated ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘don’t know’. This shows that in general, the respondents hoped for skilled workers and professionals to be able to find jobs easily in any ASEAN country.

### **Statement 3: Basic social protection and health services are provided to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.**

In accordance with ASEAN’s blueprint for 2025, ASEAN is continuing to promote the development of a strong healthcare industry that will contribute to better healthcare facilities, products, and services to meet the growing demand for affordable and quality healthcare in the region. Thus, 24.52% of the respondents answered ‘strongly agree’, 47.12% answered ‘agree’, 17.79% indicated ‘neutral’, 8.65% answered ‘disagree’, 1.44% answered ‘strongly disagree’, and 0.48% answered ‘don’t know’ with regard to basic social protection and health services being provided to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.

#### **Statement 4: There is good governance and very much less corruption in ASEAN countries.**

The blueprint for ASEAN 2025 states that good governance will happen through greater transparency in the public sector and engagement with the private sector. ASEAN countries should enhance engagement with the private sector and stakeholders to improve transparency and the synergies between government policies and business actions across industries and sectors in the ASEAN region. For the aspiration of good governance and very much less corruption, 23.56% of the respondents strongly agreed, 42.31% agreed, 22.12% were neutral, 8.17% disagreed, 2.40% strongly disagreed, and 1.44% indicated 'don't know'.

#### **Statement 5: ASEAN countries are well connected through roads, railways, air, and shipping.**

The ASEAN Blueprint envisages that ASEAN transport cooperation should focus on the areas of land transport, air transport, maritime transport, and transport facilitation and, in addition, embrace sustainable transport as a key, new sectoral focus due to its vital role in the sustainable development of the ASEAN region. For the aspiration that ASEAN countries are well connected through roads, railways, air, and shipping, 24.52% of the respondents chose 'strongly agree', 45.67% chose 'agree', 19.71% chose 'neutral', 9.13% answered 'disagree', and 0.48% answered 'strongly disagree' or 'don't know'.

#### **Statement 6: People and businesses can communicate easily with one another through ICT.**

The ASEAN Blueprint mentions that information and communications technology (ICT) is a key driver of ASEAN's economic and social transformation. A strong ICT infrastructure with pervasive connectivity in ASEAN can facilitate the creation of a business environment that is conducive to attracting and promoting trade, investment, and entrepreneurship. Also, ASEAN countries hope to establish a digitally enabled economy that is secure, sustainable, and transformative. Accordingly, for the aspiration that people and businesses are able to communicate easily with one another through ICT, 23.56% of the respondents answered 'strongly agree', 51.92% answered 'agree', 19.23% chose 'neutral', 4.81% answered 'disagree', and 0.48% indicated 'don't know'.

#### **Statement 7: ASEAN peoples are well aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.**

For the aspiration that ASEAN peoples are well aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes, 47.12% of the respondents indicated 'agree', 19.23% indicated 'strongly

agree', 24.04% indicated 'neutral', 5.77% answered 'disagree', 0.96% answered 'strongly agree', and 2.88% replied 'don't know'.

**Statement 8: The ASEAN Community strongly engages and benefits its peoples.**

ASEAN and subregional cooperation projects can broaden ASEAN people-to-people, institutional, and infrastructure connectivity to facilitate the movement of capital as well as skilled labour and talent. The stronger the ASEAN Community is, the greater the opportunities for people in the region. Therefore, for the aspiration for an ASEAN Community that strongly engages and benefits its peoples, 42.79% chose 'agree', 21.15% chose 'strongly agree', 27.40% indicated 'neutral', 5.77% answered 'disagree', 1.44% chose 'strongly disagree', and 1.44% answered 'don't know'.

**Statement 9: There is equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.**

The AEC Blueprint 2025 focuses on enhancing equitable economic development for the ASEAN Community. For this reason, ASEAN peoples hope for equitable access to opportunities. The respondents expressed their opinions on this statement: 48.5% chose 'agree', 19.71% chose 'strongly agree', 17.79% indicated 'neutral', 9.62% chose 'disagree', 1.44% chose 'strongly disagree', and 2.88% chose 'don't know'.

**Statement 10: Human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected.**

For the aspiration that human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected through the implementation of ASEAN's 2025 Blueprint, 43.75% of the respondents answered 'agree', 20.67% answered 'strongly agree', 23.08% answered 'neutral', 9.13% answered 'disagree', 1.44% answered 'strongly disagree', and 1.92% answered 'don't know'.

**Statement 11: The region's biodiversity and natural resources are sustainably managed and conserved.**

According to ASEAN's 2025 Blueprint, by developing a sustainable growth agenda that promotes the use of clean energy and related technologies, ASEAN can actively promote green development, including renewable energy through green technology, and enhance sustainable consumption and production. When asked their opinion about the region's biodiversity and natural resources being sustainably managed and conserved, 41.83% of the respondents chose 'agree', 20.67% chose 'strongly agree', 23.56% chose 'neutral', 9.13% chose 'disagree', 1.92% chose 'strongly disagree', and 2.88% chose 'don't know'.

**Statement 12: ASEAN’s major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.**

ASEAN implements frameworks to support the deployment and utilisation of efficient low-carbon technologies and promote access to mechanisms that foster more affordable low-carbon technologies. Accordingly, for the aspiration that ASEAN’s major cities will be less polluted and more liveable than they are today, 38.46% answered ‘agree’, 20.19% answered ‘strongly agree’, 26.92% answered ‘neutral’, 8.17% answered ‘disagree’, 3.37% indicated ‘strongly disagree’, and 2.88% answered ‘don’t know’.

**Statement 13: ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.**

Regarding the aspiration that ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards, 44.23% of the respondents answered ‘agree’, 24.04% answered ‘strongly agree’ and ‘neutral’, 5.29% answered ‘disagree’, 1.44% answered ‘strongly disagree’, and 0.96% replied ‘don’t know’.

**Statement 14: ASEAN is a strong voice and an important player in global negotiations and forums.**

ASEAN countries prefer a more strategic and coherent approach towards external economic relations with a view to adopting a common position in regional and global economic forums and continuing to promote engagement with global and regional institutions. For this reason, ASEAN peoples hope that ASEAN will be a strong voice and an important player in global negotiations and forums. For this statement, 53.37% of the respondents chose ‘agree’, 18.75% chose ‘strongly agree’, 21.63% answered ‘neutral’, 3.85% chose ‘disagree’, 1.93% chose ‘strongly disagree’, and 0.48% chose ‘don’t know’.

**Statement 15: ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world (e.g. the United States and China) to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.**

When asked about the aspiration that ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region, 50.48% indicated ‘agree’, 23.08% indicated ‘strongly agree’ and ‘neutral’, 1.44% chose ‘disagree’, and 0.96% answered ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘don’t know’.

**Table 3: Aspirations and Hopes for ASEAN Integration by 2025**  
(% of respondents)

Aspirations and Hopes by 2025	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. Consumers have easy access to goods and services from any ASEAN country.	28.85	45.67	16.83	5.77	0.48	2.40
2. It is easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.	28.85	47.60	18.75	3.85	0.48	0.48
3. Basic social protection and health services are provided to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.	24.52	47.12	17.79	8.65	1.44	0.48
4. There is good governance and very much less corruption.	23.56	42.31	22.12	8.17	2.40	1.44
5. ASEAN countries are well connected through roads, railways, air, and shipping.	24.52	45.67	19.71	9.13	0.48	0.48
6. People and businesses can communicate easily with one another through ICT.	23.56	51.92	19.23	4.81	0.00	0.48
7. ASEAN peoples are well aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.	19.23	47.12	24.04	5.77	0.96	2.88
8. The ASEAN Community strongly engages and benefits its peoples.	21.15	42.79	27.40	5.77	1.44	1.44
9. There is equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.	19.71	48.56	17.79	9.62	1.44	2.88
10. Human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected.	20.67	43.75	23.08	9.13	1.44	1.92
11. The region's biodiversity and natural resources are sustainably managed and conserved.	20.67	41.83	23.56	9.13	1.92	2.88
12. ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.	20.19	38.46	26.92	8.17	3.37	2.88
13. ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.	24.04	44.23	24.04	5.29	1.44	0.96
14. ASEAN is a strong voice and important player in global negotiations and forums.	18.75	53.37	21.63	3.85	1.92	0.48
15. ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.	23.08	50.48	23.08	1.44	0.96	0.96

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ICT = information and communications technology.

## Expectations by 2025

Next, the respondents were given the same 15 statements, but this time they were asked to answer based on their expectations for the enhancement of ASEAN integration by 2025 (Table 4). The available answers were again ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neutral’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’, and ‘don’t know’.

### **Statement 1: Consumers have easy access to goods and services from any ASEAN country.**

About 58% of the respondents agreed with this statement due to the AEC Blueprint 2025. The blueprint includes the elimination of tariffs, the advancement of regional trade processes and procedures, and the promotion of trade liberalisation within the region. In fact, 20.67% of respondents, with many from the business group, strongly agreed with this statement. However, more than 15% were neutral, while approximately 5% disagreed on the expectation of easy access to goods and services from any ASEAN country.

### **Statement 2: It is easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.**

The new blueprint includes not only the creation of job opportunities within the region but also a reduction in income inequality in member states as among ASEAN’s social and cultural priorities. Accordingly, around 55% of the respondents agreed with the expectation that it will be easier for skilled workers and professionals to work in other regional countries, while 18% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 22% chose ‘neutral’, and about 4% disagreed because of the education gap among regional countries. Nearly 1% did not know whether it would be easy to find work within the region.

### **Statement 3: Basic social protection and health services are provided to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.**

With regard to the provision of basic social protection and health services for migrants within the region by 2025, 42% of the respondents agreed, and 18% strongly agreed. At present, most migrants and temporary workers are from informal sectors, and this has led to the situation where the current social protection and labour laws in the region cannot fully cover or be effective for them. Therefore, around 3% of respondents disagreed, and nearly 1% strongly disagreed with this expectation by 2025.

**Table 4: Expectations for ASEAN Integration by 2025**  
(% of respondents)

Expectations by 2025	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. Consumers have easy access to goods and services from any ASEAN country.	20.67	58.17	15.87	5.29	0.00	0.00
2. It is easy for skilled workers and professionals to find work in other countries in ASEAN.	18.27	55.77	20.67	4.33	0.00	0.96
3. Basic social protection and health services are provided to migrant and temporary workers from other countries in ASEAN.	18.27	42.79	34.62	3.37	0.96	0.00
4. There is good governance and very much less corruption.	16.35	33.65	34.13	11.54	1.92	2.40
5. ASEAN countries are well connected through roads, railways, air, and shipping.	15.87	56.25	23.08	4.81	0.00	0.00
6. People and businesses can communicate easily with one another through ICT.	16.83	54.33	22.60	3.85	0.48	1.92
7. ASEAN peoples are well aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.	16.83	42.31	32.21	6.73	0.48	1.44
8. The ASEAN Community strongly engages and benefits its peoples.	16.83	41.35	37.50	2.88	0.48	0.96
9. There is equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.	13.94	42.79	37.98	1.92	0.00	3.37
10. Human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected.	12.98	44.71	31.25	8.17	0.96	1.92
11. The region's biodiversity and natural resources are sustainably managed and conserved.	10.10	47.12	31.73	7.21	1.44	2.40
12. ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.	12.50	36.06	33.65	13.94	1.92	1.92
13. ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.	15.87	44.71	32.69	4.33	0.96	1.44
14. ASEAN is a strong voice and important player in global negotiations and forums.	16.83	53.85	21.63	4.33	0.96	2.40
15. ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.	14.90	58.65	21.15	3.37	0.48	1.44

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ICT = information and communications technology.

#### **Statement 4: There is good governance and very much less corruption.**

Good governance and the fight against corruption is key for the ASEAN Community for moving towards sustainable ASEAN integration by 2025. More than 85% of the respondents thought that ASEAN would become a region where good governance and very much less corruption was achieved by 2025. However, around 15% disagreed, strongly disagree, or did not know. Many who did not agree thought that Myanmar was a country with a weak rule of law and high levels of corruption across many sectors. They also thought there would be a high risk of political interference in the judicial systems of the regional countries.

#### **Statement 5: ASEAN countries are well connected through roads, railways, air, and shipping.**

Efforts are being made for infrastructure development for the purposes of sustainable economic growth, economic integration with enhanced trade, a reduction in development gaps, and the improvement of resource sharing and efficiency to provide basic needs among ASEAN Member States. As such, more than 95% agreed with this expectation, although some responded neutrally, and about 4% expressed disagreement. As there is a wide gap between the more developed ASEAN countries, such as Singapore, and the less developed countries, such Myanmar, some respondents believed that the economic and political differences in the member countries would hinder connections through infrastructure development.

#### **Statement 6: People and businesses can communicate easily with one another through ICT.**

About 93% of the respondents who answered 'strongly agree', 'agree', or 'neutral' for this statement mentioned the 2015 ASEAN ICT Master Plan. Since 2011, the development of the ICT sector in the ASEAN region has brought more employment opportunities, transformation into the e-system in some government activities, and vital advancements in the telecommunications sector. Many of the respondents imagined that the future regional economic situation regarding ICT development would advance rapidly by 2025. Some respondents – 3.85% for 'disagree', 0.48% for 'strongly disagree', and 1.92% for 'don't know' – expressed the opinion that Myanmar had been left behind in ICT-related areas compared with other member countries. As a result, they said that Myanmar would face difficulties in catching up in the next decade, especially in ICT development, for which the country ranked 138th in the Global Innovation Index 2015.

**Statement 7: ASEAN peoples are well aware of the ASEAN Community and its programmes.**

Myanmar took the role of chair of ASEAN for the first time in 2014, and, as a result, most of the people in the country have at least some awareness of the ASEAN Community and its programmes. Accordingly, about 40% of the respondents pointed out that they knew the ASEAN Community and its programmes well, and 16.83% agreed with the statement's expectation. Meanwhile, 32% answered 'neutral', and about 4% chose 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', or 'don't know'.

**Statement 8: The ASEAN Community strongly engages and benefits its peoples.**

More than 95% of the respondents reacted to the opportunities and advantages of creating the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the AEC by agreeing, strongly agreeing, or responding neutrally to this statement. They talked about the openness of the regional cooperation, tourism opportunities, increases in foreign direct investment, and the advancement of health and education services within the ASEAN region by 2025. However, 2.88% chose 'disagree', and 0.48% chose 'strongly disagree'. Meanwhile, 0.96% said they did not know whether ASEAN would be a region that strongly engages and benefits its peoples by 2025.

**Statement 9: There is equitable access to opportunities for ASEAN peoples.**

About 42% of the respondents agreed with the statement that opportunities will be equally accessible to all ASEAN peoples by 2025, while 13.94% were in strong agreement, and 37.98% were neutral. As there are still constraints, weaknesses, and problems facing regional integration within the AEC, about 1.92% expressed their disagreement, while 3.37% were unsure about the statement.

**Statement 10: Human rights and minorities in the region are effectively protected.**

ASEAN has made efforts to protect human rights and minorities by implementing three mechanisms: the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, and the Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Promotion and Protection of Migrant Workers. Accordingly, about 44% of the respondents believed the protection of human rights and minorities would be stronger by 2025, whereas nearly 13% had strong confidence in the realisation of the statement. However, 8.7% did not agree with the expectation, and nearly 1% strongly disagreed with it due to income inequality and gender discrimination in Myanmar and other regional countries.

**Statement 11: The region’s biodiversity and natural resources are sustainably managed and conserved.**

The consumption of natural resources has risen along with the increases in populations and rapid economic growth in the region. Thus, national resource management is also considered as one of the key factors in ASEAN’s Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, 2015. Therefore, more than 90% of the respondents agreed that the region’s biodiversity and natural resources will be sustainably managed and conserved by 2025. In contrast, due to the shortage of natural resources such as natural gas, oil, jade, and rubies in Myanmar in recent years, 7.21% expressed their disagreement, and 1.44% strongly disagreed that this would occur in the region by 2025.

**Statement 12: ASEAN major cities are less polluted and more liveable than they are today.**

Although the Transboundary Haze Pollution Act has been introduced for air pollution in the region, ASEAN Member States still face pollution-related issues. To combat this, the ASEAN region will adopt the Roadmap for a Transboundary Haze-Free Region by 2020. As a result, more than 80% of the respondents agreed with the statement.

**Statement 13: ASEAN is able to anticipate, respond, and recover faster together from natural disasters and health hazards in the region.**

About 95% of the participants responded positively to the expectation of cooperation in responding to natural disasters and climate change. ASEAN Member States cooperate to recover from natural disasters and health hazards through integration in adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, technology development and transfers, REDD+ financing (such as through the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund and the REDD+ financing mechanism), and transparency of action and support (including measurement, reporting, and verification). However, about 5% of the respondents indicated that ASEAN is a region that produces high-level emissions due to its industrial activities.

**Statement 14: ASEAN is a strong voice and an important player in global negotiations and forums.**

As the ASEAN region is trying to become an integrated community in various sectors through the AEC Blueprint 2025, most of the respondents, about 93%, agreed that ASEAN will play a strong role in global negotiations and forums by 2025. In contrast, about 7% opposed this view because of the various risks that might be encountered.

**Statement 15: ASEAN deeply engages powers in the region and the world (e.g. the United States and China) to ensure peace in the region and the Asia-Pacific region.**

Since ASEAN is trying to promote economic, political, and security-related cooperation among its member countries through the enhancement of the AEC and integration in various sectors, about 95% of the respondents expected this statement to be accomplished by 2025. However, nearly 5% disagreed with this expectation.

**Upgrading the capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat to meet its increasing challenges**

Finally, the 208 survey participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea of gradually upgrading the implementing and monitoring capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat to meet its increasing challenges. Of the respondents, 32.69% strongly agreed with the idea (Figure 13). More than half of the total respondents (58.17%) agreed, while 8.65% and 0.48% of the respondents were neutral or disagreed, respectively. None of the respondents strongly disagreed.

**Figure 13: Agreement with Upgrading the Implementing and Monitoring Capabilities of the ASEAN Secretariat**

