

# Press Releases: State Department Celebrates Fourth Anniversary of Flagship Program for Southeast Asian Leaders

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 3, 2017

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On December 3, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) – the State Department’s flagship leadership program in Southeast Asia – will celebrate its fourth anniversary. To mark the occasion, emerging leaders in all ASEAN member countries will implement community service projects, December 1–10, throughout their local, national, and regional communities. This dynamic campaign, collectively known as YOUNIFIED, will bring leaders together with U.S. diplomatic missions for 10 days of high-impact projects.

The State Department will also participate in YOUNIFIED through three community service events in Washington D.C. from December 4–8.

In one of the events, an American alumnus of a State Department exchange program in Southeast Asia will visit students at the Theodore Roosevelt High School Global Studies Campus to conduct educational outreach. The alumnus will speak about the impact of exchanges and opportunities for American students to participate in State Department exchange programs.

State Department personnel will also volunteer at two local organizations – the D.C. Central Kitchen and N Street Village.

For more information on the YOUNIFIED projects in ASEAN, visit <https://asean.usmission.gov/yseali/yseali-younified> to view our map of projects by location.

Project updates and photos can be accessed on the YSEALI Tumblr: <https://youngsoutheastasianleaders.tumblr.com/submit>.

To learn more about YSEALI, please visit: <https://asean.usmission.gov/yseali/>.

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## **Press Releases: International Day of Persons With Disabilities**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
December 3, 2017

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The opportunity for everyone in America to enjoy equal rights in political, social, economic, and cultural life is central to our success as a nation. Passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act recognized that persons with disabilities have the same rights as other persons to full and equal participation in society.

Promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities globally is a foreign policy priority of the Trump Administration. The Department of State works with foreign governments to promote inclusive policies; oppose discrimination everywhere in all its forms; assist foreign governments to develop and implement laws; support civil society; and encourage the private sector and governments to employ persons with disabilities.

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we affirm our commitment to advance empowerment, dignity, and equal rights for persons with disabilities. We reiterate that all people, in every country, deserve full and equal access to all spheres of society.

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## **Press Releases: U.S. Ends Participation in the Global Compact on Migration**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
December 3, 2017

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The United States has decided to end participation in the UN process to develop a Global Compact on Migration (GCM).

Negotiations on the GCM will be based on the New York Declaration, a document adopted by the UN in 2016 that commits to “strengthening global governance” and contains a number of policy goals that are inconsistent with U.S. law and policy.

While we will continue to engage on a number of fronts at the United Nations, in this case, we simply cannot in good faith support a process that could undermine the sovereign right of the United States to enforce our immigration laws and secure our borders.

The United States supports international cooperation on migration issues, but it is the primary responsibility of sovereign states to help ensure that migration is safe, orderly, and legal.

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## [Press Releases: Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors](#)

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC

December 2, 2017

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**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Good evening. Good evening, all, and it's just such a pleasure to have you here and to welcome you to the State Department. As the Secretary of State and an ex officio trustee of the Kennedy Center, it really is a privilege to carry on the department's longstanding partnership with the Kennedy Center as we celebrate our distinguished honorees tonight.

Let me begin by thanking David Rubenstein, Deborah Rutter, Les Moonves, Michael and Noemi Neidorff, and all the other leaders and partners of the Kennedy Center for their commitment to one of our nation's marquee cultural institutions. I also want to recognize and thank the many supporters in attendance whose generous contributions facilitate hundreds of Kennedy Center performances each year for residents and visitors to our nation's capital, a truly special opportunity for them.

Artistic expression represents perhaps the highest form of freedom of speech – the words and the messages conveyed through music, through dance, the content of film, television, to reflect the free society that we are, even with our many flaws. It bridges our differences, it celebrates our diversity, and it draws us ever closer as a free people.

Regrettably, in large parts of this world today, such conditions do not exist. Regimes that are intolerant of artistic expression are intolerant of freedom itself. These freedoms that we enjoy, as all of you know, are protected daily by our men and women in uniform and are promoted by the diplomats who serve this country the world over. As the Secretary of State, I know that the world looks to America as the national example of liberty. And speaking through their creative works, each of our honorees tonight affirm

the American value of free expression to the whole world.

Moreover, the honorees with us tonight are here because they have a special power to elicit powerful emotions and powerful responses in millions of people. They connect our memories of our past and our memories of those who are most precious to us. Their performances leave the deep impressions that mark the years of our lives. Each of the performers honored tonight touch in our hearts what Abraham Lincoln called “the mystic chords of memory”. For these reasons and as a celebration of our freedom and for your exceptional talents, we’re proud to honor each of you tonight here at the State Department.

So, again, to all of our guests, welcome. We’re delighted you can be here with us at the State Department. Please enjoy your dinner and the rest of the evening. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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## **[Press Releases: World AIDS Day 2017](#)**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
December 1, 2017

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On World AIDS Day, we honor those who have lost their lives to AIDS, celebrate the progress we have made together in combatting this disease, and continue our commitment toward ending AIDS as a public health threat.

The United States is proud of its longstanding leadership in the global HIV/AIDS response, working alongside our many partners around the world, made possible through the compassion and generosity of the American people.

We are at an unprecedented moment in the fight against AIDS. For the first time in modern history, we have the opportunity to control a global pandemic without having a vaccine or a cure.

The latest results achieved through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) show that we are closer to this goal than ever before through our acceleration of HIV prevention and treatment efforts. Driven by transparent, accountable, and cost-effective investments under the PEPFAR Strategy for Accelerating HIV/AIDS Epidemic Control (2017-2020), which I launched earlier this year, we continue to lead the way.

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