



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



STATEMENT BY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA

ON BEHALF OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

COMPRISING BRUNEI DARUSSALAM, THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA,
THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC,
MALAYSIA, THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR, THE REPUBLIC OF
THE PHILIPPINES, THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE, THAILAND AND
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

ON

AGENDA ITEM 27(A): IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD
SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AGENDA ITEM 27(B): SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS
RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING,
DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

AGENDA ITEM 27(C): FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER
PERSONS: SECOND WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGEING

OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 7 OCTOBER 2013

Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Third Committee for the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I wish you all success in steering the current session.
2. It also gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of the ten Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Our joint statement today is on ASEAN's standing with regard to the social development pillar and illustrating some of the efforts and progress made towards fulfilling the region's social development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

3. ASEAN aspires to establish a peaceful, prosperous and progressive ASEAN Community by 2015; a community which is politically cohesive, economically integrated, culturally harmonious and socially responsible. To this end, ASEAN has been making every effort to elevate the quality of life of its peoples based on the principles of sustainable development. In the spirit of cooperation and collective responsibility, the region's efforts to realize an ASEAN Community are furthered, among others, through the advancement of social welfare and protection, social justice and rights, as well as human development.
4. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint has identified seven priority areas to be followed through towards improving the social welfare and protection of the ASEAN people. These areas include alleviating poverty, tackling the negative impacts of integration and globalization, strengthening food security, widening access to healthcare and promoting healthy lifestyles, as well as improving the capability to control communicable diseases. The goals of the ASCC are envisaged to be achieved by implementing concrete and productive actions that are people-centred and socially responsible.

Mr. Chairman,

5. ASEAN welcomes the overview put forth in the Secretary-General's report pursuant to the World Summit for Social Development and the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly on the 51st Session of the Commission for Social Development in promoting the empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all. Realizing the critical role of the empowerment of people as an approach to the advancement of social development, the 8th ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE), held on 5 July 2013 in

Yogyakarta, Indonesia, adopted the theme “Advancing Community Empowerment to Enhance a Better and Sustainable Livelihood”.

6. Policies aimed at reducing poverty, promoting employment and social integration and those intended to foster greater empowerment of people should be mutually reinforcing. Enhanced efforts should indeed be made to address the root causes of poverty, inequality and social exclusion. As mentioned in the Secretary-General’s report, priority attention should be given to inequality, social inclusion, empowerment and participation, full and productive employment and decent work for all in formulating the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

7. In addition to the social welfare and protection component, ASEAN is also committed to promoting social justice and mainstreaming people’s rights into the Organization’s policies and all spheres of life. The three priority areas in this category are the protection of the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, namely women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities; promotion of the rights of migrant workers; and encouragement for corporate social responsibility.
8. ASEAN has adopted the Strategic Framework on Social Welfare and Development (2011-2015) aimed at safeguarding the welfare and rights of older people, persons with disabilities, children and families; the finalization of the Mobilization Framework which sets fifteen priority areas aimed at promoting disability-inclusive development in ASEAN; the proclamation of the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities for the period of 2011-2020; and the adoption of the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community. We welcome Singapore’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July this year.
9. With regard to promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, ASEAN reiterates its commitment to continue strengthening social protection and mainstreaming the perspectives and concerns of the vulnerable groups. We would like to share some of the activities carried out as part of the Strategic Framework on Social Welfare and Development (2011-2015). The Second ASEAN Workshop on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): “An Inclusive and Accessible Society for All: Employability and Employment” was held from 18 to 20 February 2013 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. ASEAN’s efforts are in line with the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General’s Report on the way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

10. We recognize that social protection is a cross cutting issue that requires inclusive, holistic, and adaptive approaches that leverage strong collaboration between Governments and with the private sectors, development partners, civil society, service providers, and other stakeholders. At the 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (AMMSWD) which took place on 6 September 2013 in Siem Reap, Cambodia adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection for submission to the Leaders at the 23rd ASEAN Summit in October 2013 in Brunei Darussalam. The Declaration affirms that everyone, especially the poor, those at risk, persons with disabilities, older persons, out-of-school youth, children, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups are entitled to equitable access to social protection which is a basic human right.
11. ASEAN's commitment to improving social protection for its elderly is supported at the regional level by means of networking and exchanging information. Such mechanisms were demonstrated by the continuing commitment of Japan to convene the annual ASEAN and Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies as an effective platform for information sharing, capacity enhancement, and building partnerships amongst the social welfare, health and labour sectors. ASEAN welcomes the plan to convene the 11th Meeting with the theme "Active Ageing" scheduled to be held from 3 to 5 December 2013 in Tokyo.
12. ASEAN's efforts in addressing the issue concerning older persons are reiterated in the Secretary-General's report on the "Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing". The report recommends Member States ensure that the social integration of older persons and the promotion and protection of their rights form an integral part of the development agenda at the national and global levels.

Mr. Chairman,

13. Aside from tending to vulnerable groups, ASEAN also highly values its youth as critical agents of progress in the region. In May this year, the 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth was convened in Brunei Darussalam, under the theme "Young People - Building Tomorrow's ASEAN Today". The Meeting reiterated the important role that the younger generation, especially young professionals, can play to boost ASEAN solidarity by offering voluntary community services in areas such as rural development, disaster relief, health, education and the environment as well as supporting vulnerable groups, including people who are differently-abled, and fostering entrepreneurial skills. The Meeting also discussed the issue of unemployment that affects millions of young people around the globe.

14. The Meeting endorsed the “Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Youth Volunteerism and Entrepreneurship” as guiding principles to promote greater economic self-reliance among young people through enterprise and entrepreneurship development. Several initiatives were also endorsed to instill a sense of community including the establishment of an ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program (AYVP) and other youth professional volunteer initiatives. ASEAN Youth Program Fund (AYPF) was established to further support ASEAN Youth cooperation and development.
15. Through projects underpinned by respect and appreciation for ASEAN values including multicultural diversity, the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program aspires to support the development of youth for the betterment of communities across the region. In upholding volunteerism as a social development apparatus, ASEAN is pleased to align itself with the Secretary-General’s Five-Year Action Agenda concerning youth empowerment and volunteering presented in January 2012.
16. Another endeavor undertaken by ASEAN in this regard was the 1st ASEAN Youth Entrepreneur Seminar and Expo (AYESE) held in May 2013, which served as a platform to promote economic self-reliance and support for the self-employment of ASEAN youth. The 1st AYESE was tailored to foster youth entrepreneurship in the ASEAN region through discussions on youth’s role in shaping the future of ASEAN.

Mr. Chairman,

17. To conclude, the successful realization of an ASEAN Community by 2015 hinges on the inclusive and full participation of its people. ASEAN acknowledges the critical role of empowering people as an approach to the advancement of social development. As such, it is redoubling its efforts towards a community that is people-centered and socially responsible, where the wellbeing, livelihood and welfare of its people are enhanced. ASEAN Member States will continue to work closely with one another to foster greater partnership among government agencies, private sectors and civil societies towards accelerating the region’s social development drive for an inclusive, prosperous and enduring ASEAN Community by 2015.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.