



# MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



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**STATEMENT BY MR. RAJA REZA RAJA ZAIB SHAH  
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**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,  
THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND AND THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF  
VIET NAM**

**ON**

**AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE**

**68<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK, 11 OCTOBER 2013**

Mr. Chairman,

It gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of the 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 on this pertinent issue. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. ASEAN notes with appreciation the various reports introduced under this agenda item. We are of the view that the reports provide a useful basis for the Committee's further deliberation on the issue of advancement of women.

Mr. Chairman,

3. ASEAN's recognition of the importance of women and their participation in development is well established, dating back to 1975 when the first ASEAN Women Leaders' Conference was held. Since then, ASEAN has continued to promote the issue of advancement of women.

4. At the regional level, the primary mechanism through which ASEAN coordinates and monitors implementation of key ASEAN priorities and cooperation on women's issues and concerns is the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW). Since its establishment in 2002, the ACW meets regularly to coordinate and carry out the implementation of ASEAN's key regional priorities and cooperation in women's issues.

5. Previously, ACW had two Work Plans with the same goal : which was to pursue gender equality in the ASEAN region, namely the Work Plan to Operationalize the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in ASEAN and Work Plan on Women's Advancement and Gender Equality, which were implemented simultaneously throughout the period 2005 to 2010.

6. Building from the strong foundation laid by both Work Plans, ACW introduced the Work Plan of the ASEAN Committee on Women (2011-2015), incorporating the spirit of new ASEAN as a rule-based organisation since the coming into force of the ASEAN Charter on 15 December 2008. The Work Plan takes into consideration new elements from the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2009 – 2015) that accelerates the realization of an ASEAN community; the formation of the ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) on 7 April 2010; as well as the establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in 2009 that would further promote the advancement of women and the promotion and protection of the rights of women.

Mr. Chairman,

7. ACWC continues to improve coordination and assisting ASEAN Member States in the implementation of their commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A recent example of the work concluded by the ACWC is the finalization of the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN, which addresses the concern of violence against women and children as obstacles to achieving equality, peace and development. The Declaration was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the recently concluded 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit on 9 October 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

8. With its adoption, ASEAN's commitment to overcome the obstacles is reaffirmed by strengthening regional cooperation, collaboration, and coordination endeavored outlined by the key measures indicated in the Declaration, such as building adequate resourced national welfare systems, protection, recovery and rehabilitation of victims, promotion of legislation against violence against women and children and protection of the right of women and children. The Declaration also further enhanced the coverage of vulnerabilities and emerging forms of abuse confronted by women and children by addressing conflict, migration, disaster, emergency situation, climate change, human trafficking, labor, cyber based abuses, persons with disabilities, statelessness and belonging to ethnic and/or indigenous groups.

9. ACWC would continue to emphasis on the importance of intensified collaboration among ASEAN Member States Governments, Civil Society Organisations, and relevant local, regional and international institutions, to effectively eliminate violence against women and children. In this regard, ASEAN recognizes the contributions by our external partners in the implementation of activities outlined in the ACWC Work Plan 2012-2016 in promoting rights of women and children and promotion of best practices in eliminating violence against women and children.

Mr. Chairman,

10. As mentioned earlier, ASEAN efforts are reflected by the activities of its various bodies, among others:

- 10.1 The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) ; AMMW had convened its inaugural meeting on 19 October 2012 in Vientiane, Lao's People Democratic Republic, with the aim to further strengthen ASEAN cooperation on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. It adopted the Vientiane Declaration on Strengthening Gender Perspective and ASEAN Women's Partnership for Environmental Sustainability and further tasked the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) to effectively implement the commitment reflected in the Vientiane Declaration and monitor its progress in collaboration and coordination with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies. AMMW has continues to convene various regional workshops, seminars, training sessions and consultative meetings that provided platforms for government officials, civil society organisations, professionals and other stakeholders to exchange views, share experiences and build commitments and a common understanding on various gender issues. This include the convening of the informal session with the Ministers/Heads of Delegations of the Plus Three Countries (China, Japan and RoK) on ways to strengthen the cooperation for gender equality and women's advancement in the region through the existing mechanisms of the ASEAN Plus Three Countries and East Asia Countries;
- 10.2 The Meeting of ASEAN Women Parliamentarians (WAIPA) : This year's WAIPA meeting focused on the issue of maternal and child health in ASEAN. The Meeting agreed to a Draft Resolution on "Fostering Maternal and Child Health in ASEAN"; and also on the progress of efforts undertaken by respective Member States to achieve MDGs 4 and 5; and
- 10.3 The ASEAN Women Circle (AWC) ; A setup which was formed with the idea to enable spouses of Ambassadors of ASEAN Member States residing in countries they are posted to engage and reach out the ASEAN nationals as well as the local community on the awareness on issues

related to women and children, through its various activities, exhibitions and campaigns throughout the year.

Mr. Chairman,

11. ASEAN noted the Reports of the Secretary-General related to the advancement of women, among others, the report entitled “Measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly” dated 22 July 2013, which the Secretary-General made reference to the relevance of gender mainstreaming as a globally accepted strategy for promoting the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality in efforts to integrate a gender perspective in the work of the United Nations system.

Mr. Chairman,

12. I am proud to assert on behalf of fellow ASEAN Member States that despite the challenges of development among us, we remain committed both at the national and regional level to continue making significant strides towards improving the situation of women across the region.

13. That notwithstanding, ASEAN realises that more work needs to be done towards achieving our common goals in advancing and protecting the rights of women. In this regard, ASEAN reaffirms its readiness to work and cooperate closely with all interested partners and stakeholders.

14. To conclude, I would like to echo the words of the Secretary-General of ASEAN, “The spirit of promoting gender equality should be an integrated part of ASEAN’s policies and programmes towards the ASEAN Community. The goal of gender equality should be central to all three pillars of economy, political-security and socio-cultural of ASEAN”.

I thank you Mr Chairman.