



Statement by

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on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

During the Second Committee, 79th Session of the United Nations
General Assembly

Agenda Item 21: Group of Countries in Special Situations

- (a) Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs);
- (b) Follow-up to the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

New York, 21 October 2024

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). At the outset, we would like to commend Madam Under-Secretary-General and High Representative on her comprehensive report.
2. ASEAN aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Uganda, Nepal, and Botswana, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, LDCs and LLDCs, respectively.

Mr. Chair,

1. We are meeting at another critical juncture as the international community encounters various and complex challenges. Apart from economic and financial difficulties, food, energy, and climate crises, the ongoing armed conflicts have further undermined our collective efforts to attain the 2030 Agenda.
2. Groups of countries in special situations namely the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS remain the most vulnerable amidst the current turbulent global geopolitical and economic landscape. Their special development situations and unique challenges combined with external shocks have threatened to widen the gap between them and more developed countries.
3. We, in ASEAN, express our deep concern over the growing disparities. Unless we take decisive and urgent actions to address the ongoing vulnerabilities, the development gap will continue to expand. In this light, the specific development needs of the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS must be prioritized at the forefront of the global development agenda, taking into account the continued support measures and enhanced partnerships are ensured.

Mr. Chair,

4. ASEAN welcomes the successful outcomes of the Summit of the Future, during which member states reaffirmed and renewed our commitment to multilateralism and reinvigorated partnerships. The adopted Pact for the Future with concrete deliverables and ambitious actions is instrumental in recalibrating our collective efforts to address the pressing needs of developing countries, particularly those in vulnerable situations.

5. ASEAN takes note of the recognition in the Pact for the Future regarding the special attention for countries in special situations like LDCs and LLDCs who require continued and increased assistance to achieve the SDGs to bridge the science, technology, and innovation gap. Therefore, the crucial task before us is to ensure effective implementation of the specific actions contained in the Pact. In this connection, ASEAN remains dedicated to harnessing these outcomes to empower member states to embark on their development endeavors.
6. ASEAN recalls our support for the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs (DPoA) adopted last year, which represents a new generation of renewed and strengthened commitments between the LDCs and their development partners, including the private sector, civil society, and governments at all levels. We continue to urge the international community to intensify the support for LDCs and their partners to implement the commitments outlined in the DPoA and its six priority areas.
7. In looking forward to the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs (LLDC3), ASEAN welcomes the principally adopted new Programme of Action for LLDCs that will be formally endorsed later in Gaborone, Botswana in December. We are of the view that the PoA represents a critical turning point as it charts out the future direction and priority areas for LLDCs and their partners in the next decade. On this note, ASEAN hopes for an effective and timely implementation of the new PoA, not only by LLDCs themselves but also by transit countries, development and trading partners as well as the international financial institutions through genuine partnerships.

Mr. Chair,

8. At the regional level, ASEAN has undertaken several initiatives, focusing on narrowing the development gap and leveraging the potential benefits of deeper regional economic integration and connectivity through a commitment to building a highly integrated, cohesive, innovative and resilient ASEAN community.
9. We firmly believe that by narrowing the development gap among its member states, ASEAN's collective competitiveness will be further enhanced. Through the work of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Task Force and relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, steady progress on the implementation of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025) has been made, with 95 projects carried out in the priority areas of food and agriculture,

trade facilitation, micro, small and medium enterprises, education, as well as health and wellbeing.

10. Moreover, ASEAN has finalized the Reframed Strategies for Narrowing Development Gaps and Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth in the ASEAN Region as a forward-looking approach. This will leverage ASEAN's efforts in promoting sustainable and inclusive growth to foster greater regional cooperation, as well as a good reference for developing successor IAI work plans and promoting cooperation on narrowing the development gap in ASEAN in the new era.

Mr. Chair,

11. Through the initiatives outlined above, ASEAN has continued its great effort to support the vulnerable member states. We reiterate our commitment to further promote equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development across the ASEAN community and welcome continued and increased support and assistance from external partners in the relevant processes.
12. In closing, we strongly encourage all stakeholders and development partners to enhance their concerted efforts to bridge the existing development gaps and address the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by countries in special situations. ASEAN reaffirms its unwavering commitment to collaborating with our development partners and the United Nations Development System to attain sustainable development through multilateral cooperation to overcome this challenging time.

Thank You.