



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations



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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
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 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

**67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 8 OCTOBER 2012**

Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you as Chair of the Third Committee for the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as members of the Bureau, on your election. I wish you all success in helming the current session.

2. It gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of the ten Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Our joint statement today will look at ASEAN's standing with regard to the social development pillar while illustrating some of the efforts and progress made towards fulfilling the region's social development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

3. ASEAN is approaching its target of establishing a peaceful, prosperous and progressive ASEAN Community by 2015; a Community that is people-centered and socially responsible; a Community where the well being, livelihood and welfare of its people are enhanced. To this end, ASEAN aspires 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 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.

5. ASEAN welcomes the recommendations for eradicating poverty, as 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. The recommendations presented include creating decent employment opportunities, providing universal access to social protection, addressing domestic financing gaps, and promoting the participation of all members of society.

Mr. Chairman,

6. 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.

7. With regard to promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, ASEAN's efforts are in line with the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's Report on the implementation of policies and programs related to persons with disabilities. The Report highlighted, among others, the need to harmonize national structures with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other human rights instruments, to remove barriers to equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, as well as to strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders so as to effectively implement the disability-inclusive commitment.

8. A program to assess Member States' policies for vulnerable groups was carried out at the 8th ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development held in Hanoi, Viet Nam last 11-14 September 2012. Themed "Promoting Social Welfare and Security for Disadvantaged People", the Meeting underscored the need for ASEAN Member States to heighten cooperation and the exchange of information and experiences in order to better address social issues, particularly those related to the rights of disadvantaged groups.

9. Additional positive developments in 2012 and 2011 include the adoption of the ASEAN 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.

Mr. Chairman,

10. 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 9th ASEAN and Japan High-Level Officials

Meeting on Caring Societies held in Tokyo, Japan on 25-28 October 2011. During the Meeting, ASEAN Member States shared the current status, best practices and other issues pertinent to human resource development in health and welfare, as well as the employment of persons with disabilities and the elderly in their respective countries.

11. Recommendations put forth during the Meeting included the need to facilitate holistic solutions involving active participation of responsible government bodies, civil society groups and the target population in all stages of formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies; as well as to improve the functional integration of vulnerable people into the community by recording best practices and supporting effective social welfare services.

12. Accordingly, the High-Level Meeting in Tokyo reflected ASEAN's effort in addressing the concerns that were reiterated in the Secretary-General's Report on the integration of older persons in social development. The Report emphasized how older persons can and should be enabled to continue contributing to social and economic development, and that the social integration of older persons cannot be achieved unless they are able to express their opinions and make decisions about matters affecting their lives.

Mr. Chairman,

13. ASEAN continues to recognize the critical importance of joint multi-stakeholders collaboration in exercising its commitment to protecting the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. In conjunction with that, ASEAN countries continue to act on the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community as adopted during the 19th ASEAN Summit held in Bali in 2011. The Summit also proclaimed 2011-2020 as the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities. The partnership among governments, private sectors and civil societies was reflected during the Regional Conference on Raising Awareness of the ASEAN Disability Forum held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 28-31 March 2012. Among the concerns highlighted during the Forum was the need for representations across all levels of society so as to allow for a broader promotion of pertinent guidelines such as the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the World Report on Disability.

Mr. Chairman,

14. Aside from tending to vulnerable groups, ASEAN also highly values its youth as critical agents of progress in the region. Last year in October, the 7th ASEAN Ministerial

Meeting on Youth in Hanoi, Viet Nam saw the proposal by Malaysia to develop the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program that was subsequently endorsed. As a platform for youth volunteerism, the Program aimed at offering opportunities in knowledge-driven volunteerism, encouraging the exchange of learning experiences, enhancing cross-cultural understanding, developing capacity, and forging a sense of regional identity while making a sustainable difference in communities across the region.

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 with strong minds, kindness and solidarity who will contribute to the betterment of communities across the region. Upholding volunteerism as a social development apparatus, ASEAN is pleased to align itself with the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's Report on the implementation of volunteerism-related national and regional policies, as well as the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda concerning youth empowerment and volunteering presented in January this year.

16. Another endeavor undertaken by ASEAN in this regard was the ASEAN Youth Forum held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 1-2 April 2012. Themed "The Roles of Youth in ASEAN Community Building", the Forum sought to identify ways to strengthen the role of youth in helping to create a prosperous ASEAN Community. The Forum highlighted four priority areas to which youth can contribute more actively. These areas are the promotion of ASEAN awareness, enhancement of entrepreneurship skills, cultivation of leadership values, and youth volunteerism towards fortifying the ASEAN Identity.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Undoubtedly, the successful realization of an ASEAN Community by 2015 depends on the contribution of the region's youth as well as the protection of the rights of its disadvantaged people. There remains much more to be done in connecting youth across the region, and in empowering and engaging vulnerable groups, particularly women, disabled persons and the elderly. ASEAN Member States shall continue to work closely with one another and 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.