



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations



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**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE SENATOR BAHARUDIN ABU BAKAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND 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 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 15 OCTOBER 2012

Mr. Chairman,

I am making this statement on behalf of the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country Malaysia.

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).

5. ASEAN's commitment to the advancement of women and to the promotion and protection of the rights of women are clearly reflected in the 1998 Ministerial Declaration on the Advancement of Women as well as in the 2004 ASEAN Ministerial Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region.

6. Despite the different levels of development within ASEAN, the region's commitment to advancing the status of women of the region is clearly demonstrated by the fact that all ASEAN Member States are party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In this connection, ASEAN notes with satisfaction that for the period covering its 49th – 51st sessions, the CEDAW Committee has made available its concluding observations on the periodic reports of two ASEAN members.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The adoption of the ASEAN Charter in 2007 provided additional impetus and paved the way for enhancing ASEAN's structured and sustained engagement on a wide range of issues and areas including human rights.

8. Since the adoption of its Charter, ASEAN continues to make significant progress in promoting and protecting human rights, including on the advancement of women across the region.

9. With a view to improve coordination and to assist ASEAN Member States in the implementation of their commitments under CEDAW, ASEAN had in April 2010 established the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

10. A recent example of the work being actively undertaken by the ACWC is the convening of consultative meeting with the CEDAW Committee experts on violence against women and the SG's Special Representative on Violence against Children in Manila, the Philippines in January 2012. The Consultation provided an opportunity to exchange views on initiatives designed to prevent and address all forms of violence against women and against children.

11. Additionally, the consultation also helped to highlight good practices and experiences on the implementation of laws, policies and actions aimed at overcoming the invisibility of violence, promoting an integrated agenda for violence prevention and elimination, and improving the availability and quality of data and research on the magnitude and incidence of violence against children and violence against women.

12. More recently Mr. Chairman, ACWC held its Fifth Meeting on 2-5 July 2012 in Jakarta, Indonesia. During this meeting, ACWC deliberated on the operationalisation of its Work Plan 2012-2016 including on concept papers for 12 projects and activities for implementation in the period 2012-2014.

13. Among others, planned projects include:

13.1. publication of ASEAN best practices in eliminating violence against women and violence against children in ASEAN Member States;

13.2. development of a regional network of social services agencies aiming at empowering victims of violence against women and violence against children in ASEAN;

- 13.3. promoting convergence in the implementation of cross-cutting issues in the CEDAW and CRC Concluding Observations; public campaign to stop violence against women through activities commemorating the International Day on Anti-Violence Against Women;
- 13.4. activities to strengthen economic rights of women, particularly to land and property, with regard to feminisation of poverty; and
- 13.5. development of an ASEAN progress report on women's advancement and gender equality.

Mr. Chairman,

14. ASEAN welcomes the updates contained in report A/67/185 in which the Secretary-General elaborated on progress made thus far in efforts to integrate a gender perspective in the work of the United Nations system.

15. Through its resolution 66/132, the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to continue providing annual reports on the follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA) and the outcome of its 23rd Special Session with an assessment of progress in gender mainstreaming including information on key achievements, lessons learned and good practices, and recommendations on further measures to enhance implementation.

16. ASEAN notes the findings of the report which tracks the integration of gender perspective in the work of selected intergovernmental bodies namely the General Assembly and its main committees; ECOSOC and its functional commissions and in the reports of the Secretary-General.

17. ASEAN agrees with the findings contained in the report among which includes the suggestion that intergovernmental processes, including high-level events, continue to provide many opportunities for strengthening global norms and policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women but that these opportunities remain underutilized. In this connection, we also support the view that further efforts are needed to mainstream gender perspectives into all areas of the work of intergovernmental bodies.

18. At the same time, ASEAN also believes that full, effective and accelerated implementation of the BDPA is integral to achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. We further believe that the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women should feature prominently in the post- 2015 development framework.

Mr. Chairman,

19. I wish to share with the Committee some of the continuing work being undertaken by ASEAN towards fulfilling the MDG targets related to the advancement of women.

20. Through the Joint Declaration on the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in ASEAN adopted in Cha-am, Thailand in 2009, ASEAN had reaffirmed its commitment to realising the full attainment of all MDG targets. Alongside the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system, the Declaration also outlined five key focus areas namely advocacy and linkages; knowledge; resources; expertise; and regional cooperation and regional public goods.

21. In essence, the Joint Declaration outlined the steps that ASEAN would take in realising those objectives among which include the development and implementation of a roadmap for the attainment of the MDGs as a framework for collective action among ASEAN Member States.

22. Focusing on five key areas namely advocacy and linkages; knowledge; resources; expertise; and regional cooperation and regional public goods, ASEAN had further committed to establish a monitoring and evaluation system, including generation of gender statistics for the attainment of MDGs in ASEAN in collaboration with the UN specialized bodies.

23. In January 2011, a regional workshop at the Senior Officials level was convened in Bangkok, Thailand, to consider the format and content of the ASEAN Roadmap for the Attainment of the MDGs which was finalised in August that same year and has since then, been guiding the efforts of member states towards the achievement of the MDGs.

24. One of the most recent ASEAN initiatives aimed at implementation of measures outlined in the Roadmap was the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Workshop on MDGs with the theme "Accelerating the Achievement of MDGs and Priorities beyond 2015" held on 30-31 July 2012 in Yangon, Myanmar. The workshop saw participation of some 135 cross-sectoral policy makers from ASEAN member states and representatives of UN agencies.

25. Among others, the meeting discussed the post-2015 scenario and noted that while ASEAN is leading the Asia-Pacific region and the world on poverty reduction and is making fast progress on other development goals, cross- and in- country disparities, between rural and urban areas, and between men and women, hold large sections of the population back from achieving the MDGs.

26. The Workshop concluded with discussions on the plan to commence a regional assessment on MDGs in ASEAN Member States this year, which will be drawn from the ASEAN Statistical Report on MDGs. The assessment will provide an updated picture of the progress in achieving MDGs in the region since the previous regional assessment which was undertaken in 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

27. In concluding, I am proud to assert on behalf of fellow ASEAN members that despite the different levels 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.

28. That notwithstanding, ASEAN believes that more 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.

I thank you Mr Chairman.