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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 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 64: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF
CHILDREN**

OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

69TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 15 OCTOBER 2014

Madam Chair,

1. 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.

2. At the outset, ASEAN notes with appreciation the briefing by various experts on reports submitted under this agenda item which highlight among others, latest developments on the situation of children affected by armed conflict and violence; violence against children; as well as the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. These reports provide a useful basis for the Committee to objectively reflect, assess and respond towards strengthening its efforts at further promoting and protecting the rights of children.

Madam Chair,

3. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Judging by the progress achieved on the promotion and protection of the rights of children thus far, we have every reason to celebrate. But as we ponder and take stock of these successes, let us be cognizant that this year, as we deliberate the Post-2015 Development Agenda, it presents us with a golden opportunity to double our efforts to overcome inequities affecting the poorest and most vulnerable children.

4. ASEAN notes with concern that disparities and inequities of development growth have affected these children, especially in least developed and developing countries. The disproportionate concentration of extreme poverty among children remains a huge barrier to the accomplishment of children's rights. Regionally, we acknowledge that the ASEAN region comprises a group of countries that vary significantly in their economic and social development. These variances are taken into consideration as we develop regional strategies and plans of action on moving forward social development agenda, including children's agenda.

5. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint of 2009 continues to be the basis of the work of ASEAN. It outlines strategies and targets that serve to address the concerns of vulnerable groups including children. The Strategic Framework and Plan of Action for Social Welfare, Family and Children 2011-2015 compliments the Blueprint as ASEAN accelerates efforts towards achieving the socio-cultural community goals.

6. In essence, it contains practical measures aimed at building a people-oriented ASEAN, formulated based on key ASEAN policy documents namely the 2010 Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children; the 2004 Vientiane Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children; the 2001 Singapore Declaration on the Commitments for Children in ASEAN; and the Resolution on the ASEAN Plan of Action on Children adopted in the

Philippines.

Madam Chair,

7. In working towards achieving its aims of an integrated ASEAN Community by 2015, ASEAN leaders place tremendous emphasis on protecting children against violence over the years. The most recent and significant step on its commitment was the adoption of “the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN”.

8. The Declaration, adopted on 9 October 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, among others, addresses the concern of violence against women and children as obstacles to achieving equality, peace and development. The Declaration also reflects ASEAN’s collective efforts to strengthen legal and policy frameworks and institutional capacity to fight violence against women and children. It also outlines the common resolve of ASEAN Member States to develop effective strategies to eliminate harmful practices which perpetuate gender stereotyping, violence against women and violence against children.

9. Pursuant to the adoption of the Declaration, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Women and Children (ACWC) discussed strategies to implement the commitments reflected in the Declaration. In addition, the ASEAN best practices in elimination of violence against women and children were published on 12 December 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Subsequent to the 8th Meeting of the ACWC held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 17-18 February 2014, a dialogue session was organized with civil societies from ASEAN Member States. This dialogue explores possible joint partnerships through ACWC planned projects corresponding to the commitments in the Declaration.

10. As we speak, the 9th ACWC Meeting, discussing among others, follow-ups to the implementation of the planned projects, is taking place in Yangon, Myanmar.

Madam Chair,

11. On a positive note, ASEAN takes great pride in the progress made with regard to children’s development in the region. ASEAN remains committed in mainstreaming the participation of children in regional programmes as illustrated by the convening of the 3rd ASEAN Children’s Forum held on 1-6 June 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Forum is a significant venue for children’s participation in the regional architecture.

12. Three children from each ASEAN Member State as well as the Republic of Korea, Japan and China attended the 3rd ASEAN Children’s Forum. Despite their relatively young age, we were encouraged by the ideas, discourse and proposals of these children on wide-ranging issues, including on children migration, child labour, trafficking of children and quality education, to name a few.

13. ASEAN believes the biennial ASEAN Children's Forum will continue to be a platform for ASEAN children to keep abreast of current issues, especially issues plaguing children; partake in intellectual discourses among their ASEAN contemporaries, with diverse background and differing perspectives; and establish people-to-people contact at an early age, as ASEAN moves towards a single Community by 2015.

Madam Chair,

14. ASEAN lauds the collaboration between UN agencies and member states as well as regional groups in moving the children agenda forward. We recognize the Cross-Regional Round Table on Violence against Children; UNICEF's engagement and partnership with regional groups on children affected by armed conflict; as well as UN system's collaboration with its Partners to leverage resources for children in a more comprehensive approach.

15. ASEAN too has had its engagement and collaboration with UN agencies on issues concerning the rights of children. That said, we would like to see more cooperation between ASEAN and the UN at both national and regional levels to support the collective efforts in attaining child-related goals. As we continue to constructively engage the UN system though, ASEAN wishes to stress the importance of adherence to their respective mandate by each UN child protection mechanism, as well as respect for bilateral frameworks between each member state and the UN Country Team. These mandates and bilateral frameworks are drafted and produced for a reason, based on the principles of complementarity, partnership and effectiveness.

Madam Chair,

16. To conclude, ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to continue prioritizing the welfare of its children, who represents the future of the region's continued peace and prosperity. ASEAN shall continue working towards an ASEAN Community that supports safe and healthy childhoods; a Community that offers abundant opportunities for learning and social growth towards nurturing competent citizens who would contribute to the region's continued peace, stability and prosperity.

Thank you, Madam Chair.