GENERAL STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

AT THE 69TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON AGENDA ITEM 69: STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

11 December 2014
Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar.

2. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports on the “Central Emergency Response Fund” and the “International Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance in the field of natural disasters: from relief to development” and the "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

3. We would also like to express our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to the Government and People of the Philippines for the loss of lives and properties caused by Typhoon Hagupit. ASEAN expresses its solidarity with the Philippines and wishes the Government and People all the best in their recovery efforts.

Mr. President,

4. The outbreak of the Ebola virus is a good showcase of the relevance of the United Nations’ humanitarian work. In this regard, ASEAN welcomes the General Assembly resolution 69/1 adopted on 19 September 2014. We reiterate our support to the United Nations agencies including the World Health Organisation in their effort to contain and prevent this serious/ public health threat.

Mr. President,

5. ASEAN has established dialogue partner relations with the United Nations since 2006 and one of the areas of our cooperation is on humanitarian assistance. We have set up the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management, in short, the A.H.A. Centre, which acts as our main coordinating body on Disaster Management and Emergency Response work. We have also in place a joint task force to coordinate work on humanitarian assistance amongst various ASEAN bodies. Tripartite Core Group involving ASEAN, the UN and Myanmar was one of the success stories in
coordination and facilitating humanitarian assistance after Myanmar was hit by the Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

6. At the Second ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDDM) convened in Bandar Seri Begawan on 16 October 2014, ASEAN adopted the strategy "One ASEAN, One Response 2020 and Beyond: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One". This Strategy, which will be launched in 2015, will ensure ASEAN to respond effectively and efficiently to regional disasters.

7. ASEAN remains fully committed in our partnership with the United Nations, whereby our cooperation is carried out through the ASEAN-UN Strategic Plan on Disaster Management (2011-2015). Currently, we are in the second phase of implementation which focuses on enhancing capacity and technical support to the A.H.A. Centre in the areas such as sharing of best practices and experiences on disaster preparedness and early warning system; as well as on post-disaster response and recovery management.

8. Beyond ASEAN, we also work very closely with our dialogue partners in the Asia-Pacific region through several processes we have in place; namely the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Military Medicine Exercise; and the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise which bring together the largest civilian- military personnel and assets in the region.

9. As part of ASEAN’s continued strategic assistance to support the recovery efforts of the Government of the Philippines from Typhoon Haiyan/ Yolanda, a High-Level Conference on Assistance for the Recovery of Yolanda-Affected Areas was convened in August this year for ASEAN to share best practices and experiences on the recovery work after a large-scale disaster.

10. With regard to the Malaysian Airlines MH 370 incident, ASEAN Member States had extended assistance to Malaysia and also participated in the extensive Search and Rescue and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean. This Search and Rescue Operation signifies genuine maritime cooperation as countries agreed to set aside their overlapping jurisdictional claims in the searched waters for the good cause of humanitarian assistance.
Mr. President,

11. With the continued challenges faced by the United Nations humanitarian system, particularly to meet the increasing humanitarian needs with overstretched capacities and resources, ASEAN sees the importance for the first World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Turkey in 2016, as a platform for states, stakeholders and humanitarian actors to identify solutions to address the challenges and further strengthening the commitment and efforts to ensure effective, efficient and accountable delivery of humanitarian assistance.

12. ASEAN holds strong belief in involvement of our people who are our greatest asset. In line with our “ASEAN Community” objective, we have put in place an *ASEAN Young Volunteers Programme* and established an *ASEAN Young Professionals Volunteer Corps* to create a spirit of cooperation and togetherness among our young professionals, through grass-roots community work in areas of their expertise.

13. Beside regional cooperation under ASEAN, individual ASEAN Member States has also sought to promote and strengthen humanitarian assistance through bilateral efforts and initiatives.

Mr. President,

14. Last but not least, ASEAN continues to ensure that our national and regional efforts will continue to complement and contribute positively to the work of the United Nations especially the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). We stand ready to share the lessons learnt and experiences gained by ASEAN for better preparedness and responses in future humanitarian needs.

15. ASEAN will continue to do its best to strengthen and improve our coordination work and better prepare ourselves for any future humanitarian and disaster relief needs.

I thank you, Mr. President.