Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

2. ASEAN associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr Chairman,

3. We are meeting amidst global economic uncertainty. Global growth is sluggish and economic recovery remains anemic. Developed countries are confronting deep structural challenges with no easy solution in sight. Productivity has fallen, unemployment remains high and financial markets remain volatile.
4. The difficult economic conditions have made it more challenging for countries to achieve their development goals. Unfortunately it is the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that remain the most vulnerable. The special situations of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS coupled with external economic conditions mean that the gap between these countries and others in the world will widen if their vulnerabilities are not adequately addressed. This will have a bearing on the capacity of these countries to meet their national development objectives and achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

5. We cannot afford to remain passive in the face of these challenges. Countries in special situations and the international community must work together and take a multi-stakeholder approach to establish a new global development agenda. In this regard, ASEAN notes that LDCs have made some progress several years into the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action but more needs to be done. The LLDCs will be holding the second UN Conference on LLDCs in 2014 to comprehensively review the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, and to adopt a new development framework for the next decade. In addition, the third international conference on SIDS in 2014 will be an important occasion to assess development gaps and address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS. We in ASEAN welcome these initiatives, and call on all stakeholders to work together to ensure successful outcomes. ASEAN also notes the United Nations Secretary-General’s report on ‘a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the LDCs’, and urges further consultations on the institutional arrangements for a technology bank. ASEAN also welcomes the initiative to launch the South-South Technology Transfer Facility for LLDCs, which will take place in October this year at the sidelines of the Global South-South Development Expo in Nairobi, Kenya.

6. Against this backdrop, we should not lose sight of the importance of accelerating the achievement of development goals for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs. Bold action and renewed political commitment is required to tackle challenges such as climate change and natural disasters as well as issues such as food security and economic shocks. While each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, the international community must also live up to its commitments and shared responsibilities.
7. In this regard, ASEAN welcomes the outcomes from the ‘Special Event towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)’ in September this year, as well as the 6th High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development held this month. ASEAN is of the view that discussions on the post-2015 development agenda should identify and mainstream strategies that further assist LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in attaining their development goals. This will require close collaboration with the United Nations system as well as regional banks, the private sector, non-government organizations and other stakeholders.

Mr Chairman,

8. ASEAN has made significant progress in regional integration and cooperation since its founding in 1967. At the same time, we in ASEAN are acutely aware that narrowing the development gap between the member states in Southeast Asia is critical to improving the lives and well-being of people in our region. This is an inescapable reality for Southeast Asia, which encompasses not only emerging economies but also those from the LDC, LLDC and SIDS groups. This recognition is reflected in the ASEAN Charter’s prioritization of goals such as alleviating poverty, narrowing the development gap, and promoting sustainable development in the region.

9. To this end, ASEAN has undertaken a number of initiatives. The Initiative for ASEAN Integration promotes cooperation and mutual assistance to close the development gap among ASEAN members and between ASEAN and the world. The ASEAN Framework for Equitable Economic Development guides ASEAN sectoral bodies to ensure that economic integration in ASEAN helps to alleviate poverty and addresses development issues. This includes enhancing efforts to reduce barriers to trade and investment, raising productivity and upgrading infrastructure. ASEAN sectoral bodies are also working on strengthening capacity in areas such as agriculture, investment, transport, and trade facilitation. As part of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, there are ongoing efforts to enhance intra-regional connectivity through developing physical, institutional, and people-to-people linkages. This will complement the ongoing efforts by ASEAN to realise a people-oriented ASEAN Community by 2015.
10. ASEAN is also working closely with our external partners, including the United Nations Development Programme. This includes working together on issues of common concern such as climate change, environmental degradation, natural disasters, and pandemic diseases. Earlier this October, ASEAN Leaders met with the United Nations Secretary-General in Brunei Darussalam to strengthen partnership between ASEAN and the UN. At the Summit, the United Nations reiterated its support for the implementation of the ASEAN Roadmap for the Attainment of the MDGs. The Summit affirmed the importance of continuing efforts towards strong, inclusive, sustainable and balanced growth. The Summit also agreed on the importance of maintaining free and open markets and called for greater transparency and discipline in the financial system.

Mr Chairman,

11. In closing, let me reiterate that ASEAN stands ready to work closely with countries in special situations, development partners and the United Nations system to realise a renewed global partnership for development and a successful post-2015 global development agenda.

12. I thank you.