Statement by
H.E. U Kyaw Tin
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on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
(ASEAN)

on Agenda Item 20:
"Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and
strengthening of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)"

at the Second Committee of the 68th Session
of the UN General Assembly

New York, 28 October 2013
Mr. Chairman,

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

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

ASEAN thanks the Secretary General for his comprehensive Report, providing us brief accounts of the outcomes of the 24th session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council. The report also sheds lights on the progress on four major issues namely, preparations for Habitat III; review of the governance of UN-Habitat; financial developments in UN-Habitat; and UN-Habitat input to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

Thirteen years after the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, more than 50 percent of the world’s population is reported to have become urbanized. In 1950, the number of urban people was slightly higher in developed countries than in developing countries. Since then, the urban transition or the demographic trend has rapidly changed. Today, of every 10 urban residents in the world, more than 7 are in developing countries.

According to the report of the Secretary General, all developing regions, most notably Asia and Africa will become more urban than rural by 2035. Moreover, the world’s urban population will further increase by adding the new urban-dwellers between now and 2050. More than 90 percent will be born in developing countries. ASEAN realizes that urbanization is a significant demographic phenomenon in developing countries and the problems posed by cities become a serious development challenge.

It is therefore crucial that the post-2015 development agenda recognizes the need to promote cities that are environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, economically productive and resilient. In this regard, ASEAN believes that the world should pay specific attention to deliverables such as improved access to adequate housing, water, sanitation, domestic energy and public transport. Furthermore, we also need to stress broader processes such as enhancing inclusive national urban policies and reducing the increased rate of urban land cover and urban sprawl, in addition to policies or plans to strengthen urban resilience.

ASEAN recognizes that the Millennium Development Goal of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 has already been met twice over. In spite of this significant achievement, over 860 million people in developing countries continue to remain in slums. Therefore, ASEAN wishes to emphasize the need for governments and the international community to step up their efforts for slum prevention and slum upgrading as well as to set a fresh target on slums in the post 2015 development agenda.
Mr. Chairman,

With the rapid trend of urbanization, a sustainable urban development has become one of the most pressing global challenges of our time. Governments must investigate critical issues in urbanization and make joint efforts to build greener, more livable, convenient, harmonious and environment-friendly cities. In this context, ASEAN fully supports the decision of the UN-Habitat Governing Council to designate 31 October of every year as World Cities Day beginning from 2014.

ASEAN welcomes the Governing Council’s resolution on inputs for and support to the preparatory process for Habitat III, as active participation of all stakeholders in the process and successful preparations will contribute to the fruitful outcomes of the Habitat III. ASEAN wishes to stresses the importance of the strategic plan focusing on seven areas and four cross-cutting issues within the context of advancing the goals and mandate of UN-Habitat.

ASEAN also welcomes the relevant and timely choice of the theme “urban equity in development - cities for life” for the seventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF7) which will be held in Medellin, Colombia from 5 to 11 April 2014. The concept of “Cities for Life” proposed by the City of Medellin will set the tone and frame for the discussion at the Forum. We are confident that the Forum will help to define new objectives and strategies for integrating equity in the development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

At its 23th ASEAN Summit held in Bandar Seri Begawan this month, the ASEAN leaders encouraged effective implementation of the ASEAN Action Plan on joint Response to Climate Change, with particular attention to vulnerable groups in adaptation efforts. They also stressed the importance of preserving, managing and sustainable use of water resources, and called on ASEAN Member States to continue effectively implementing the ASEAN Strategic Action Plan on Water Resource Management. We believe that this Action Plan will also partly contribute to the Habitat’s activities for urban development in respect of water and sanitation.

ASEAN member States wishes to express their appreciation for the technical assistance, transfer of knowledge and expertise provided by the UN-Habitat and Habitat Agenda partners in the efforts to achieve sustainability and resilience in infrastructure and urban cities development. ASEAN looks forward to continue closer cooperation with the UN-Habitat to enhance our capacity to building better and smarter cities in line with the post-2015 agenda to sustainable urbanization.

I thank you.