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Statement

by

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On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

At the Second Committee of the 68th Session of the General Assembly on Item 26: Towards Global Partnerships

New York, 29 October 2013

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to make the statement on this agenda item "Towards Global Partnerships" on behalf of the ten Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

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

ASEAN would like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his comprehensive report on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector.

Mr. Chairman,

In this era of globalization, we need strong global partnerships to address the development issues and multiple challenges facing the world today, from eradicating poverty to tackling the impact of climate change. A global partnership that is more effective, inclusive and transparent, that involves the United Nations system, Governments and all other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, in order to ensure that everyone benefits from globalization in an equitable manner.

At the same time, we should recognize the increasingly important role played by the private sector in the pursuit of sustainable development at national, regional and international levels.

In this context, ASEAN reaffirms our full support to the central role of the United Nations in global policy governance and in promoting sustainable development around the world. We also welcome progress made in implementing the recommendations stipulated in the GA resolution 66/223 on "Towards Global Partnerships" which has contributed to a more strategic approach to engaging with business partners and the design of more innovative, effective and impactful partnerships, as well as ensuring the growth and evolution of the Global Compact and its Local Networks that creates new opportunities for engaging with the private sector at the national level.
It is our conviction that the enhanced public-private sector partnerships and UN-private sector collaborations will significantly contribute to the ongoing efforts of the international community, especially the efforts of developing countries, in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Given the growing partnerships between the United Nations and the private sector, it is important to stress that the integrity and impartiality of the United Nations must be maintained, while also affirming the core values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the principles of the Global Compact.

ASEAN holds the view that the private sector’s partnerships need to be in full compliance with development priorities of partner countries, and that the cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant sectors, including the private sector, must strictly adhere to the United Nations Guidelines for partnerships. Involvement of the private sector must be accompanied by its commitments to corporate responsibility, and the highest standards of business ethics. In this regard, ASEAN attaches great importance to the role and functioning of the UN Global Compact and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy as a self-regulating mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN welcomes the Secretary-General’s proposal to establish a new United Nations partnership facility to further support the United Nations system and Member States to leverage catalytic partnerships with the full range of partners, including civil society, businesses, financial institutions, philanthropic organizations and academic and scientific institutions. We also welcome the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General, stressing the need to push forward with new, improved and diversified forms of collaboration with the private sector; to overcome operational challenges; to ensure a balance of strict standards of integrity and flexibility among agencies, funds and programmes; and to apply best practices and lessons learned throughout the UN system in order to take full advantage of current opportunities to engage with the private sector more effectively.

ASEAN would like to thank the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda for its reports entitled, “Realizing the Future We Want For All” and “A renewed global partnership for development”, which recommended features of a renewed global partnership for development that will be required for a successful post-2015 development agenda.
We also welcome the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, co-chaired by the Presidents of Indonesia and Liberia and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom entitled, “A new Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development”, in which several recommendations were proposed on the development agenda beyond 2015.

In addition, ASEAN takes note of the outcomes of the Corporate Sustainability Forum held on the sidelines of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, and the Global Compact Leaders Summit held in September 2013 in New York.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of ASEAN, we underscore the great importance of partnerships at all levels to our national development and our collective efforts to build an ASEAN Community by 2015. In our region, the private sector is the cornerstone of the new architecture of interdependence among East Asian economies, and between East Asia and the global economy at large. We are of the view that as a key stakeholder in regional and global supply chains, the participation and collaboration of the private sector are crucial to the creation of a strong foundation for the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015.

The AEC will continue to foster public-private sector engagement (PPE) to improve the coherence, transparency and synergies of government policies and business actions across industries and sectors in the ASEAN region. Private sector inputs and partnership are essential, not only in designing regional strategies and initiatives, but also in identifying problems in realizing regional integration.

Over the past years, recognizing the need to engage the business community in the process of building a dynamic AEC, ASEAN Leaders have engaged actively in dialogues with the private sector at the sidelines of ASEAN Summits. Various ASEAN forums and activities have been created for the participation of the private sector, such as the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) consultations with chambers of commerce and industry associations in the region, as well as with foreign business councils that have an interest in the ASEAN region.

In addition, regular dialogues have been held between the ASEAN Economic Ministers and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) as well as between ASEAN bodies and the representatives of industry associations and business
councils from ASEAN and Dialogue Partner countries. Such dialogues have produced several important recommendations and policy options in support of more effective regional economic integration.

Public-private participations in expositions and trade fairs have also taken place regularly, such as the ASEAN-China Expo (CAEXPO) and the ASEAN-China Business and Investment Summit (CABIS) in Nanning, China, the ASEAN-India Business Fair (AIBF) in New Delhi, India, and the ASEAN-EU Business Summit.

Moreover, recognizing the growing importance of environmental, social and governance issues for Asian Businesses, the ASEAN Corporate Social Responsibility Network was launched in October 2010 and to ensure more effective Public-Private Sector Engagement, the ASEAN Rules of Procedures for Private Sector Engagement have also been developed.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by citing one of the purposes of the ASEAN Charter which is "to promote a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the regional integration process". In this connection, ASEAN has been promoting and encouraging participation of peoples and relevant sectors in our efforts to build the ASEAN Community. ASEAN hopes that global partnership will be further enhanced to promote inclusive, sustained and equitable economic growth, the well-being of all people and environmental sustainability, thus contributing to world peace and prosperity.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.