Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN associates itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for his Note/Report on the Decisions and Policy Recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security A/68/73-E/2013/59 and on A/68/311- Report on Agriculture, Development, Food Security and Nutrition.

Mr. Chairman,

All humanity is in pain when one in eight people face chronic hunger, not regularly getting enough food and nutrition to conduct an active life. Worldwide, a total of 842
million people in 2011-2013 are suffering from chronic hunger due to extreme poverty. And up to 2 billion people lack food security intermittently due to varying degrees of poverty. Though the world has achieved some success in mitigating this adversity over the past couple of years, there are still enormous numbers of women and children going to bed hungry and without food. This is still happening in many parts of the world, even in the Asia-Pacific, in Africa and elsewhere. For instance, according to the ADB report, the Asian region is home to over 60% of the world’s poor and hungry despite its spectacular economic growth.

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) recently held its 40th Session in Rome some 40 years since its establishment in 1974. Its High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) has been working hard on its mandate. And yet, humanity has yet to make a substantial dent on global food insecurity.

Mr. Chairman,

The critical issues affecting global food insecurity still confront us: unstable and inequitable land tenure systems, mitigating and adapting to climate change, extreme volatility in international food prices, biofuel utilization, and so forth. Yet, there is no lack of available agricultural development policies, recommendations, and proposed solutions. But these need to be translated into practical measures, that link available food supplies and international agricultural policies with the practical food and hunger needs of millions in the rural countryside, bearing in mind that 75% of the world’s poor remain in rural areas. The hunger pangs being even more acute in areas where there exist protracted conflicts and calamitous situations. We in ASEAN, therefore, urge a continuing focus on addressing the problem of food security, in the contexts of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as in the formulation of
the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ASEAN is in accord with the international consensus that actions along multiple dimensions are needed to ensure food security, together with improved water and natural resources management as well as natural disaster management.

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN endeavors to contribute to the international community’s efforts to achieve global food security. We have our ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and its attendant Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Food Security (SPA-FS). We also have in place the ASEAN Food Security Information System or AFSIS (an intra-regional sharing of information on stocks, prices, production levels, imports and exports quantities in food commodities) and the ASEAN plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTEERR), the latter one serving as a mechanism to address food security in times of emergency. These ASEAN initiatives are aimed at ensuring long-term food security, enhancing cooperation between ASEAN Member States itself, as well as with our closest neighbours, and further seeks to improve the livelihoods of farmers in our region. At a time of volatile commodity prices and extreme economic uncertainties, we hope to remain vigilant on the opportunities and challenges of food security facing our region.

Since 70% of the population lives in rural areas, concerned stakeholders should consider promoting the agricultural development of small holder farmers and family-owned farms, bearing in mind that inequities in land-tenure tend to negate agricultural productivity and growth. In this regard, ASEAN takes note of the studies on the importance of investing in smallholder agriculture for food security and nutrition made by the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. Accordingly, we take
note of GA Resolution 66/222 declaring the year 2014 as International Year of Family Farming. Initiated by the Philippines, this resolution gives a strong impetus to FAO and other organizations’ initiatives in the field of agriculture. It highlights the crucial role that family agriculture plays in improving food security and nutrition, as well contributing to employment generation and poverty alleviation in both developed and developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

With reference to the Report of the Committee on World Food Security, ASEAN is unanimous in supporting and endorsing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security as contained in A/68/73, Appendix D thereof. We do hope that such Guidelines can positively lend support to the adoption of practical governmental policies that address issues in global food insecurity, particularly with reference to tenure systems of indigenous peoples and other communities with customary tenure systems.

Likewise, ASEAN acknowledges and supports the adoption by all stakeholders of the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments, which even though being voluntary and non-binding, they should be interpreted and applied in accordance with existing obligations by Member States under national and international laws.

ASEAN also welcomes the eventual adoption of an Agenda for Action in addressing food insecurity in countries facing protracted crises, through a consultative and inclusive process to develop such an agenda. ASEAN believes that this Agenda as well as the CFS’s Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, adopted during 39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, will go a long way in providing
practical measures for all stakeholders to fully address the global food insecurity situation.

We further welcome the adoption of two resolutions on soil by the Food and Agriculture Organization at its 38th Session in Rome in June 2013, which stressed the importance of soil as an essential component of agricultural development, food security, ecosystem and human well-being. ASEAN fully supports those resolutions and urges the Second Committee and subsequently the 68th Session of the General Assembly to endorse similar resolutions designating the 5th of December as World Soil Day and the year 2015 as International Year of Soil, respectively.

We in ASEAN hopes that our views hereof would lend support to the advancement of the work of this Committee in promoting a world free from any vestiges of hunger and want.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.