

**Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations  
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP**

**Remarks (as prepared for delivery)**

**The 7th High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue  
on Enhancing Complementarities  
between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and  
the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Friday, 31 March 2023  
13:30 hrs.  
VIE Hotel, Bangkok**

---

**Excellency Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister  
of Foreign Affairs of Thailand,**

**Excellency Mr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN,**

**Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

The year 2023 marks the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the near conclusion of the ASEAN Vision 2025.

This is an opportune moment to reflect on progress in ASEAN towards achieving the SDGs, as well as be reminded of the significant work that remains.

Based on our Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2023, which was launched last week, the region, including ASEAN, is not on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030, with much work ahead of us.

The past year has been quite challenging for ASEAN countries, having to contend with the continuing effects of the recent pandemic, the geopolitical

tensions, the Ukraine war and the resultant economic uncertainties, and more frequent and intense climate-related crises.

These have especially affected the vulnerabilities of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), of which there are a few in ASEAN.

Now with Timor-Leste as the newest member of ASEAN, we welcome actions spearheaded by the Chairmanship of Indonesia to include their officials in concerted efforts to promote sustainable development in ASEAN.

Undoubtedly, 2022 was yet another reminder that ASEAN countries are situated in the world's most disaster-prone region, where floods were the deadliest, accounting for 74.4 per cent of disaster events in the region and 88.4 per cent of total deaths globally. It was also a year that witnessed cascading disasters where a series of hazardous events occurred.

2022 was also the year the world population reached 8 billion, with Asia and the Pacific accounting for more than half. The region is projected to be home to 5.17 billion people by 2050. This important population milestone only adds to the pressures on society and on nature as people compete for resources and space.

We strongly believe this Dialogue will help foster regional cooperation and coherent actions to ensure sustained progress of SDGs; deliver the SDGs amidst the energy, food and finance crisis, and put forth recommendations to update the Complementarities Initiative.

## **Distinguished delegates,**

The interconnected nature of the SDGs requires a **stronger integrated approach by countries and partners** with close alignment with regional and national priorities.

UN agencies have collaborated with ASEAN sectoral working groups to strengthen the capacity of ASEAN officials to meet the 2030 Agenda.

We also proudly recognize the achievements of Indonesia's Presidency of the G20 last year, which laid the foundation for innovative and impactful initiatives in trade and economics, digitalization and energy transition, which can all be carried forward under its Chairmanship of ASEAN this year.

With the global community facing multiple shocks threatening to further reverse progress on the SDGs, allow me to highlight some of the initiatives the UN has taken to make significant enhancements in the multilateral system to better deliver the 2030 Agenda.

The first is the **launch of the SDG Stimulus** to address the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress of countries by scaling up affordable financing for development.

This financial transformation aims to accelerate progress towards the SDGs through impactful investments in areas such as renewable energy, universal social protection, sustainable food systems, urban infrastructure and digital transformation.

A second is a proposal to **establish an Emergency Platform** to strengthen the international response, which has seen gaps in intergovernmental

cooperation when addressing global shocks that are becoming more complex, more uncertain and poses higher risks.

Another is on enhancing **global digital cooperation**. A defining feature of the post-pandemic world is digital transformation which has accelerated the digitalization of economies and societies.

The initiative of a Global Digital Compact is to maximize and share the benefits of digital technology while safeguarding its users.

These are but a few examples of initiatives to improve existing international frameworks and structures which have been brought to the attention of member States for deliberation at the upcoming SDG Summit later this year.

Similarly for ASEAN, efforts are underway towards developing a post-2025 Vision that will bring about a new and vibrant ASEAN, rising from the economic and social turmoil of the past towards a new era.

To this end, the UN looks forward to contributing to the new ASEAN Community Vision that promotes inclusivity, resiliency and sustainability, and supporting its agenda that addresses emerging priorities across pillars and sectors, such as gender mainstreaming, climate change, connectivity, and many others.

In closing, I reiterate that this annual dialogue is a critical part of our partnership with the Royal Government of Thailand and ASEAN member States, ensuring that our cooperation framework is consistent with the priorities of ASEAN, supported by the Governments, as well as partners.

I wish all of you a very fruitful deliberation.

Thank you.