

HIS EXCELLENCY MR NGA KOR MING,
MINISTER OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MALAYSIA

NATIONAL STATEMENT OF MALAYSIA

EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

21st April 2025 (Monday)
United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I would like to begin Malaysia's country statement with our appreciation to Executive Secretary Her Excellency Madam Armida Alisjahbana and her team.

Excellencies,

2. Let me begin by recalling the wisdom Lao Tze, who said: "If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart." In these challenging times, we must redouble our cooperation and collective action to ensure peace for our future generations.

3. Let us recognise that **resilient and sustainable urban development** is critical for the well-being of our people and the health of our planet. Our region is **60% (4.8 billion) of the world's population** so how we continue to urbanise will determine the fate of the planet.

4. In the last fifty years, the Asia-Pacific region has achieved economic growth through urbanisation. The rapid growth of our cities is exerting pressure on housing, basic services and infrastructure. This is negatively impacting our people's well-being and jeopardising our planetary health.

Excellencies,

5. In recognition of these challenges, I would like to reiterate Malaysia's commitment to reinforcing policy and actions aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals - particularly **SDG 11, which ensures inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements**.

6. In the last 3 years, our *Housing for All* policy has delivered 466,421 affordable homes, 93.3% achievement from the targeted 500,000 units within the 5-year span of 12th Malaysia Plan (since 2021), and raising the home ownership rate to 77%. We also prioritise urban livability, with a commitment to build 1,000 parks and plant 100 million trees in the next decade.

7. Our engagement in **Voluntary Local Reviews** (VLRs) has improved multi-level governance structures with **53% of all local councils** working with the federal government to ensure priorities resonate harmoniously with our national sustainable development agenda.

8. As the first Asia Pacific member state to launch an SDG11 National Roadmap, Malaysia is scaling-up this model—partnering with the Philippines and ESCAP. I am also pleased to introduce the **Asia Pacific Urban Agenda Platform,** a collaboration with UN-Habitat, to enhance knowledge sharing, and reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, fostering a community of best practices across our region.

Distinguished delegates,

9. As the **Co-Chair of the Asia-Pacific Localization Partnership for Sustainable Cities** (or APLP-CITIES), we are heeding the Cairo Call to Action at the 12th World Urban Forum to help transform aspiration into action by empowering communities, and fostering partnerships that drive meaningful progress.

10. In addition, we are excited to initiate a new cooperation track on **National Cool Cities Action Plan and Nature-Based Solutions** for urban climate action. Co-developed with ESCAP, such engagement platforms help bring climate conversations and consultations to cities, towns, and regions.

11. As Chair **of ASEAN in 2025**, I assure you of Malaysia's steadfast commitment to actively involve all member states and ESCAP in the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum.

12. In closing, let me thank our hosts the Government of Thailand for their wonderful hospitality. Let me leave you with a Thai proverb which reads: "Many hands make work light". Together, we can cultivate a resilient and sustainable urban future that empowers our communities, uplifts our citizens, and guarantees a better quality of life for all.

Thank you.

580 words

Reviewed by NJK Khor
20 April 2025
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