REMKS OF H.E. DATO LIM JOCK HOI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN, FOR THE

6th HIGH-LEVEL BRAINSTORMING DIALOGUE ON ENHANCING COMPLEMENTARITIES BETWEEN THE ASEAN COMMUNITY VISION 2025 AND THE UN 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy Perspectives – Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

30 May 2022, 14.30 (+GMT 7)

Duration: ±10 minutes

His Excellency Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand,

Her Excellency Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP,

Excellencies, senior officials from Member States,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

1. Allow me to begin by congratulating the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and UN ESCAP for successfully organising the 6th High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue. This platform continues to serve as a valuable venue for learning and exchanging best practices, as well as identifying new and emerging approaches that can accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. In particular, this policy dialogue provides an opportunity for us to update one another on priority areas for action to reach the SDG
targets, especially as we fast-track initiatives to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and build a more inclusive and sustainable ASEAN Community.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

3. ASEAN continues to pro-actively address the impacts of the pandemic, while at the same time seizing opportunities to integrate inclusive and sustainable approaches that complement and reinforce the attainment of the SDGs.

4. Although the region’s economy has returned to pre-pandemic levels and is projected to grow by 4.9 percent in 2022 and 5.2 percent in 2023, we should remember that an estimated 10 million people have been pushed back into extreme poverty by the pandemic. Given this, we must strive to also achieve inclusive growth in ASEAN in our recovery efforts.

5. Our recovery is also contingent on the equitable roll-out of the vaccination program. I am pleased to inform that currently, 66 percent of the ASEAN population have been fully vaccinated. We are therefore on course to achieve the World Health Organization (WHO)’s target of vaccinating 70 percent of our population by mid-2022.

6. Nevertheless, ASEAN remains vigilant against downside risks to the recovery caused by the deteriorating global environment. These include disruptions to the supply of key commodities such as foods, fuel, fertilizer, and metals due to geopolitical tensions, rising costs in logistics and transport, the economic slowdown in major economies, and high inflationary pressures.

7. In this regard, ASEAN is fully committed to implementing the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) as the strategy for ASEAN to rebound stronger, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more resilient to future crises. Taking a whole-of-ASEAN Community approach, the Framework and its Implementation Plan sets out five broad strategies, focusing on health systems, human security,
economic integration, inclusive digital transformation, as well as sustainability, to realise a sustainable and people-centred ASEAN Community.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

8. With the adoption of the **ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement Framework (ATCAF)** last year, all ASEAN Member States have reopened their borders to welcome fully-vaccinated travellers. Our priority now is to strengthen this Framework by having a harmonised vaccine-recognition portal to facilitate safe regional mobility.

9. To further reinforce the complementarity between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the SDGs in the context of recovering from the pandemic, the 15th ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM) held in May 2022 reaffirmed the commitment to the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This includes the commitment to continue **Building Regional Health System Resilience and Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery**, as part of the overarching health goal to “**ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**”

10. Such commitment concretely covers mobilising resources by exploring an expanded regional funding mechanism for COVID-19 recovery. This includes the **ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund** and the **ASEAN Regional Reserve for Medical Supplies (RRMS)**, as well as taking measures to ensure timeliness and efficiency of accessing and using these resources, among others.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

11. ASEAN remains steadfast in its commitment to achieve the SDGs through strategic initiatives across the three ASEAN Community pillars. At this juncture, allow me to highlight some notable developments that ASEAN has achieved in the past year, which further underscores the complementarities between our two development agendas.
12. In October 2021, ASEAN adopted the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) at the 20\textsuperscript{th} ASEAN Economic Community Council Meeting. With this Framework, ASEAN aims to achieve resilient and resource-efficient economic growth. The circular economy model supports sustainable development by making effective and efficient use of materials and energy, thereby reducing resource use in production and promoting sustainable consumption. Recognising that a broader strategy is needed to support Member States in achieving the climate agenda, ASEAN is also developing a strategy for Carbon Neutrality that will create a pathway for decarbonisation and transition towards low carbon circular economy.

13. In November 2021, the 12\textsuperscript{th} ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE) recognised the successful conduct of the 5\textsuperscript{th} ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium: Enhancing the Roles of Youth in Achieving the SDGs held in April 2021, and the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Accelerating Actions to Achieve the SDGs held in September 2021. Meanwhile, in December 2021, the 6\textsuperscript{th} ASEAN-China-UNDP Symposium on SDGs focused on “Reducing Inequality in the Decade of Action to Achieve the SDGs and Recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic”.

14. Through the leadership of Thailand and in partnership with the European Union, the ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development has been regularly convened. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Dialogue under the theme: Towards a Greener, more Innovative, Equal and Inclusive Future held in November 2021 featured the launch of the Team Europe Green Initiative for ASEAN / South-East Asia. The initiative provides the framework for joint action, seeking synergies between the European Green Deal and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

15. Lastly, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat held in February 2022 also reaffirmed such commitment to enhancing sustainable development cooperation, including with external partners, by promoting the Complementarities Initiative. In particular, the foreign ministers reiterated support for the effective implementation of the
Complementarities Roadmap (2020-2025) and for the work of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD).

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

16. There is much work ahead of us, particularly as the Decade of Action calling for accelerating actions to achieve the SDGs coincide with the second half of implementing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

17. To prepare the next development of the region, the ASEAN Leaders adopted the *Ha Noi Declaration on the ASEAN Community’s Post-2025 Vision*. This high-level policy guidance clearly recognises the complementarities between the post-2025 vision and the attainment of the SDGs as a critical component to the development of an inclusive, resilient and sustainable path for the future.

18. On this note, I encourage all of us to continue using this platform to learn from one another and, more importantly, to facilitate partnerships and cooperation that would accelerate the achievement of the SDGs as well as the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and beyond. I hope our discussion today will bear fruitful outcomes.

Thank you.