5th High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue on Enhancing Complementarities between ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

March 31st 2021, 13:00 – 15:30 (Bangkok time) / 8:00 – 10:30am (Swiss time)
Hybrid format: UN ESCAP (Bangkok) & online

Switzerland’s statement by H.E. Mr. Johannes Matyassy, Deputy State Secretary, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Excellencies,

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Thailand, UN ESCAP and ASEAN for inviting Switzerland to attend this 5th High-level Brainstorming Dialogue. It is a special honour for me to represent my country today, as I have witnessed the very first days of Switzerland-ASEAN sectoral dialogue partnership, in 2016. As the former Assistant State Secretary for Asia-Pacific, it is for me a great pleasure to see how much my country has strengthened its relations with the region.

Although I would have loved to travel to Bangkok, I would like to congratulate the chairs on maintaining this meeting in a hybrid way despite the COVID-19 situation. Achieving the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision 2025 cannot wait, and I thus welcome the increasing number of countries and organizations participating in the HLBD.

Sustainable Consumption and Production – SDG 12

In the previous editions of the HLBD, Switzerland has shared various examples of our collaboration with the region under the SDG 12, namely “Sustainable Consumption and Production”.

An important Swiss-ASEAN project under this topic is the forum that we are co-organizing with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue on Business and Human Rights and SDG 12 and that will take place in a hybrid format during the 2021 Bangkok Business and Human Rights Week. This is a good example of joining synergies between Switzerland, ASEAN and the UN, while involving public, private sectors and civil societies.
Resilience

Switzerland and ASEAN are collaborating on many different domains since the beginning of our partnership. Today, I want to talk about “resilience”, one of the priorities of the Complementarities Roadmap.

To strengthen resilience to a crisis or a shock, the three dimensions of sustainable development - environmental responsibility, social solidarity and economic performance - are to be kept in a balance. This requires policy-makers to identify opportunities, to maximize co-benefits and to manage the necessary trade-offs between different policies and interests. A transversal approach to meet a crisis like the current pandemic is complex and requires agile public policies. With the 2030 Agenda we have a shared blueprint for a more inclusive and sustainable recovery after a crisis or a shock.

Allow me to give a few examples of how Switzerland is collaborating with ASEAN and the UN in this domain.

In Southeast Asia, disasters linked to natural hazards killed more than 370’000 people in the past 20 years, while economic losses have been estimated at USD 86.5 billion per year. The new ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Program 2021-2025 answers to this need for enhanced resilience building. As a rising economic powerhouse and home to more than 655 million people, the region’s ability to recover from disasters quicker and with less future repercussions must be strengthened.

Switzerland has been partnering with key local actors to that end. In collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, the Swiss humanitarian aid supports the implementation of AADMER to conduct:
- 1) the ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management as a platform to enhance future of disaster management in our region; and
- 2) the Senior Executive Programme on Disaster Management for ASEAN Member States’ decision makers.

The AHA Centre is another important partner for Switzerland: we have been collaborating on the ASEAN Regional Disasters Emergency Response Simulation Exercises (ARDEX) since 2016 and more recently, we supported the stocking of non-food relief items at the DELSA warehouse in Chainat province in Thailand.
On climate change, one of the major challenges of our times, I am really proud that my country signed an agreement of cooperation with UN ESCAP in Bangkok in August 2020 to contribute to its Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness.

Finally, let me assure you that Switzerland is committed and stands ready to enhance the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 together with the UN Agenda 2030 in ASEAN.

Thank you for your attention.