

**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. LE LUONG MINH**  
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**ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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*His Excellency Saber Chowdhury, President of the IPU,*  
*His Excellency Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU,*  
*Excellencies, Speakers and Vice Speakers of Parliaments of IPU Member*  
*Countries,*  
*Honorable Parliamentarians,*  
*Distinguished Guests,*  
*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Parliamentarians play indispensable roles in the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals as they are to transpose these goals into national legislations, plans and strategies and supervise the process of their implementation. I thank IPU and the National Assembly of Viet Nam for the opportunity to be part of this history-making IPU Assembly as we collectively need to understand the parameters of sustainability and the resilience needed to take on the defining and life-changing issues of our times.

*Excellencies,*  
*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The ASEAN region is blessed with unique ecosystems, abundant freshwater resources and surrounded by major oceans holding around 80% of global biodiversity and forests providing the natural habitat for up to 40% of all species on

Earth. With combined population of 625 million and a combined GDP of nearly 2.8 trillion US dollars in 2014. ASEAN is the equivalent to the largest economy to the world.

However, over the years, these natural resources have been increasingly under threat. Fast-rising population and changing demographics, rapid economic growth, combined with the existing region-wide disparities among and within the countries have exerted daunting pressures and have brought along various environmental issues, such as air, water and land pollution, urban environmental degradation, trans-boundary haze, and the depletion of natural resources, particularly biological diversity. It has also led to increased consumption of resources and generation of waste, resulting in unsustainable development.

Indeed, ASEAN, as elsewhere in the world, despite an abundant natural and human resources, does face a big challenge in keeping a delicate balance between environmental sustainability and economic development. The theme “Green ASEAN” adopted in 2009 reflects this three-pronged challenge facing the region: building an environmentally sustainable clean and green ASEAN Community; transforming the “green shoots” of growth in the face of the 2008 global financial crisis into an economically resilient ASEAN anchored upon green growth and nurturing the new ASEAN to be a people-centred organization respecting and living in harmony with nature.

To realize this ASEAN Vision, the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community lays out the goals, strategies and actions to achieve this goal based on the principle of sustainable development through the three Community pillars and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration. In ASEAN’s approach, sustainable development goals are

accompanied by targets and are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national policies and priorities. They integrate economic, social and environmental aspects and recognize their inter-linkages in achieving sustainable development in all its directions. In that vein, it is also ASEAN's approach that in order to achieve sustainable development, it is essential that the well-being, welfare and livelihood of the peoples, especially the vulnerable groups, are enhanced.

Currently, ASEAN is working on several fronts to commit itself to promoting green development. Attempts to quantify sustainability and/or environmental performance of ASEAN Member States have led to various benchmarking exercises and initiatives.

In the energy sector, guided by the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation, ASEAN Member States collectively cooperate with each other to enhance energy security, accessibility and sustainability for the ASEAN region. The current Plan of Action for the period 2010-2015, under the theme "Bringing Policies to Actions: Towards a Cleaner, more Efficient and Sustainable ASEAN Energy Community" consists of seven key programme areas for cooperation namely the ASEAN Power Grid, the Trans ASEAN Gas Pipeline, Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Renewable Energy, Coal and Clean Coal Technology, Regional Energy Policy and Planning and Civilian Nuclear Energy.

In the agriculture sector, ASEAN has strengthened food security, substantially reduced the prevalence of undernourishment. Major steps have been taken towards an integrated ASEAN market by the virtual elimination of tariffs on intra-ASEAN trade in food, agricultural and forestry products.

In the environment sector, ASEAN has developed a set of key indicators for clean air, clean water, and clean land that is used for the selection of ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities Award since 2008. While actively engaged in ensuring sustainable production and consumption through promotion of environmentally sound technology and cleaner production processes, ASEAN has also sought to participate in global efforts towards addressing global environmental challenges, including developing and adapting environmentally-sound technologies.

At the same time, ASEAN Member States have embarked on cleaner production as well as energy efficiency initiatives involving the manufacturing sector as one of its key partners. Several ASEAN Member States have implemented eco-labeling schemes to encourage sustainable production.

The ASEAN Environment Year is held every three years aiming to raise people's awareness and to strengthen regional cooperation and implementation of actions on environmental conservation. The ASEAN Environmental Education Inventory Database is an interactive online resource for networking, collaboration, and information exchange. The ASEAN Youth Portal on Sustainable Development has been created to enable young people to exchange information and share experiences. The ASEAN State of Environment Report is published every three years to offer a glimpse of the prospects and challenges facing the region and highlights ASEAN efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights as an

overarching human rights body in ASEAN has conducted a series of workshops on MDGs. The workshops involved the National Focal Points of respective ASEAN Member States for the MDGs and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies engaged in the implementation of MDGs in ASEAN. The workshops aimed to produce an outcome document to be submitted to the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2013 ASEAN, at the highest level, adopted the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection with a view to creating a framework as an enabling tool for strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration in social protection.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Moving toward the establishment of a people-centred Community by the end of this year with much focus on ensuring sustainable development for the region, ASEAN has been in the process of developing ASEAN's Post-2015 Vision. While discussions are still on-going, sustainable development underpins many of the respective goals and elements of the three ASEAN Community pillars. There is broad agreement that, with regard to sustainable development, ASEAN's Post-2015 Vision should continue to promote inclusive, sustained and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, consistent with the UN Post- 2015 development agenda; further narrow the development gap and socio-economic divide among and within the ASEAN Member States while ensuring a proper balance between economic development and environmental protection; build a resilient community which is capable of responding to emerging trends and challenges, including strong regional mechanisms to address food security, energy security, natural disasters, among others; and strengthen regional institutional arrangements able to engage in

meaningful partnerships and harness the support from all stakeholders of the Community. In the context of the lack of strategic trust resulting from territorial and maritime disputes threatening the hard-earned peace, security and stability of the region, efforts to promote and ensure peaceful solution of disputes in accordance with most fundamental principles of international law and international relations require the support and participation of not only all stakeholders in ASEAN but also of the international community. To assist ASEAN in accelerating integration and its ability to sustain the process, ASEAN Parliamentarians are expected not only to communicate the ASEAN vision to the people, but also to facilitate early ratification, enforce and execute the agreements, and help harmonize legislations and policies. In the post-2015 people-centred ASEAN Community, ASEAN parliamentarians will have still greater roles to play.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

2015 coincides with a number of critical international conferences that will see international agreements and commitments that should have a bearing on our progress towards sustainable development. The recently concluded World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. This framework provides great contribution to the concept of sustainable development primarily by infusing disaster resilience, risk reduction and mitigation into sustainable development,

More critically, this year will also mark further formalization of Sustainable Development through the conduct of the Third Conference on Financing for Development, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN

Summit as well as the convening of a UN Climate Change Conference.

It is of our collective interest and shared aspiration that throughout the discussions of this Assembly, positive and practical contribution will be made towards formalization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As Parliamentarians, you are able to turn the words into actions. I wish the conference success.

Thank you!