

Speech of Secretary-General of ASEAN
Pre-Conference Meeting for the ASEAN High-Level Conference on
Assistance for the Recovery of Yolanda-Affected Areas
15 July 2014, Tuesday, 10:00 am, ASEAN Hall

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

I thank you all for your presence and participation in the meeting today.

As you may all know, at the onset of Typhoon Haiyan that devastated Yolanda areas in the Philippines last November, ASEAN promptly and collectively responded. As of 28 December 2013, ASEAN was able to deploy several CN-235 and C-130 planes and naval ships full of food items, non-food items, medical supplies, and various relief items. ASEAN also set-up water purification systems, a field hospital and mobile medical service, and deployed medical personnel, and disaster assistance and rescue teams. These were mainly coordinated through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management or the AHA Centre.

The AHA Centre also mobilised relief assistance from ASEAN's regional stockpile in Subang, Malaysia and through local procurement using the Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA), specifically providing food and drinking water, family tents, and hygiene kits. Also, the AHA Centre provided direct assistance to the operations of the Philippine National Disaster Management Office.

By December 2013, a month after, it was estimated the total humanitarian assistance made by ASEAN and ASEAN Member States had reached over USD 6 Million.

In the face of such a difficult circumstance, ASEAN solidarity was evident. ASEAN has responded as one.

In January 2014, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their meeting in Myanmar reaffirmed ASEAN's readiness to further support the Philippines in its recovery efforts. As a concrete step forward, the Ministers tasked the Secretary-General to organise, in co-ordination with the ASEAN Chair and the Philippines, a high-level conference to garner support and assistance for the populations of the affected areas.

Our experience in responding to Typhoon Haiyan underscores the significant role of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator whose Terms of Reference were endorsed at the said Summit. The role of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator, ranging from providing political leadership for high-level coordination to mobilising resources from the different sectors and mechanisms within ASEAN, its partners and other stakeholders for disaster relief and recovery, is activated in the context of large-scale disasters and pandemics. The clear purpose is to ensure a swift, multi-sectoral response that is reliable, collective, and visible.

These developments that I mentioned led to the project titled: ASEAN Strategic Assistance for Recovery and Rehabilitation for Typhoon Haiyan-Affected Areas in the Philippines

It is not the first time that ASEAN is continuing its support from responding to a disaster to the recovery stage. We may recall that ASEAN led resource mobilisation and humanitarian operations following Cyclone Nargis in 2008 in Myanmar, in support of the affected country and in close coordination with the international humanitarian community, for both the relief as well as the recovery stages. A lot of support from the international humanitarian community was generated after the conduct of a pledging conference held in partnership with the United Nations in the first few weeks

after the disaster. To address the critical needs and mobilise more support for the recovery stage, ASEAN also led and organised an ASEAN Post-Nargis Regional Partnership Conference a year later.

ASEAN will again exercise a leadership role to call for more support for the recovery efforts of Typhoon Haiyan-affected communities.

There are four components of this ASEAN's strategic assistance project.

The first is an *ASEAN High-Level Conference on Assistance for the Recovery of Yolanda-Affected Areas*. At this conference, we hope to discuss and engage with ASEAN partners to mobilise further support for the ongoing recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the Philippines. This conference will be an opportunity to explore how we can augment the contributions made so far by the ASEAN Member States and external parties. Co-convened by the Government of the Philippines and ASEAN, the conference will be held on 14 August 2014 in Manila.

The second component is a *Community Rebuilding Technical Workshop*, which will immediately follow the conference. In this workshop, ASEAN Member States such as Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand will have the opportunity to share experiences and good practices in resilient recovery. Local governments in the affected communities are also invited to share their experiences in community rehabilitation and rebuilding process.

The third component is a *Community Rebuilding Stakeholders' Meeting*. In this meeting, the local leaders from the affected communities and stakeholders will formulate concrete strategies and proposals to carry forward the commitments made during the High-Level Conference. It will serve as a platform for a coordinated and programmed approach in planning for recovery efforts. The Stakeholder's Meeting will be held in Jakarta a month after the High-Level Conference.

The fourth component is an *Adopt-a-Municipality Project*. This is aimed at mobilising technical assistance to the affected localities identified as pilot-communities. The capacities of local governments and stakeholders to undertake resilient recovery and sustainable development would be developed in order to implement the plans formulated during the stakeholders' meeting.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The resources required for implementation of such a project are enormous. More enormous are the sufferings and difficulties that the people at the Haiyan-affected areas have endured and are continuing to endure with every passing day. Our prompt and collective response to the needs of the communities hit by Typhoon Haiyan saved thousands of lives. Thousands more may still need to be saved, tens of thousands to be normalised. In striving to build a people-oriented and people-centered natural -disaster-prone ASEAN, where our people do care and share, it is our duty not only to save but also to make sure the people who survived and their communities would become more resilient and prepared for such disasters.

Thank you very much!