

## **ASEAN Cooperation on Sports**

Excellency, Mr. Chairman, Dr. Phankham VIPHAVANH, Minister of Education and Sports of Lao PDR,

Excellencies, ASEAN Ministers responsible for sports,

Ladies and Gentleman,

1. It is indeed my pleasure to join you at this 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports. I wish to thank His Excellency, Minister VIPHAVANH and the Government of Lao PDR for hosting and making excellent arrangements for the Meeting.

2. I have been apprised of the work done by the Sports sector and I would like to thank Indonesia, as the former Chair of this sectoral body on sports, for all the efforts made in the area of sports cooperation. I totally support the assessment that sports is one of the most effective instruments in bringing about development, peace and integration through greater interaction and understanding in ASEAN. Strengthening cooperation in sports could also be a good platform to build a healthy and active lifestyle of ASEAN peoples. The sports sector plays a significant role in realising a people-oriented socially responsible ASEAN Community. The sports sectoral body should and must be instrumental in initiating, facilitating and coordinating ASEAN stakeholders' collaboration in this area.

3. Sports is an important new element of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint. I am pleased to inform you that according to the report on the mid-term review of the ASCC Blueprint implementation, about 300 out of a total of 339 actions listed in the ASCC Blueprint have been addressed. This represents approximately 90% of the total number of actions to be implemented by the various

ASCC sectoral bodies. This is indeed encouraging and I am excited to see the contribution of Sports that will be reflected in the final report card.

4. However, the draft “Survey on ASEAN Community Building Efforts” conducted in 2012 showed that, in reality, the vision of ASEAN Community 2015 is hampered by the problem of low awareness of ASEAN as a regional body. A significant number of ASEAN citizens in the ten member states do not yet have an adequate awareness and understanding of ASEAN policies and their likely impacts.

5. In this regard, it is important that ASEAN Leaders recognize sports is one of the most effective instruments in increasing the awareness of ASEAN amongst its peoples and sports has a significant role in bringing about development, peace and integration through greater interaction and understanding among the ASEAN peoples. This is in line with the Resolution of the UN General Assembly on Sports which reaffirms the use of sports to bring about positive social change. It adds to the support given by the UN Member States the role of sports in the achievement of development and peace objectives throughout the world, in particular with regard to the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As such, the SOMS and AMMS should work closely together in formulating enabling policies and an environment that can contribute to the promotion and development of sports in ASEAN.

6. The ASEAN Secretariat will continue to play active roles in supporting and coordinating with Member States to help facilitate and drive the cooperation in the Sports sector towards the vision of an ASEAN Community. The provision of the needed technical support to all cooperation activities will have to be enhanced. The

Secretariat will continue to work with Member States and Dialogue Partners to improve policy implementation in the Sports sector, streamline the work of the relevant stakeholders and highlight cross-sectoral issues with a view to improving national and regional coordination.

7. I would like to congratulate your Excellencies on the successful completion of various activities conducted to celebrate 2013 as the ASEAN Sports Industry Year 2013. I would also like to commend the efforts taken in support of Sports as one of the priority sectors identified in Brunei Darussalam's Chairmanship of the ASCC Council this year. We look forward to the success of the 27<sup>th</sup> SEA Games that Myanmar is hosting this year.

8. Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, by way of concluding, as we are striving to achieve the target of establishing the ASEAN Community by 2015, which is only two years from now, we are confident that together, under your leadership and through sharing of new ideas, more collaborative and coordinated efforts, active involvement, we will be able to realize the vision of a socially responsible people-oriented ASEAN with active and healthy lifestyles.

Thank you!

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