



Statement by the Secretary-General of ASEAN

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation 2013 (APEC) Ministerial Meeting 4-5 October 2013 Bali, Indonesia

Excellency, Marty Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia,

Excellency Gita Irawan Wirjawan, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia,

Excellencies, Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to convey to APEC and the Government of Indonesia our sincere appreciation for giving us at the ASEAN Secretariat the opportunity to share with you the key developments in ASEAN as both in ASEAN and APEC, through different pathways, we are moving towards the same objectives of free and open trade and investment and economic integration.

Progress on the ASEAN Economic Community

Excellencies,

With little more than two years before the deadline of December 2015, notable progress has been made towards the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). From an implementation rate of 74.5% at the end of December last year, we are pleased to note that 79.7% of the measures due under the AEC Blueprint have been implemented by the end of September 2013. Important gains include the implementation of measures to promote trade facilitation, capital market development, food security, pro-competition and intellectual property rights (IPR) rules and regulations, and infrastructure development.

In April 2013, the AEC Council endorsed a list of prioritised key deliverables for 2013 and 2015 in line with the Phnom Penh Agenda for ASEAN Community Building to address the challenges and obstacles in realising the AEC.

As to trade facilitation, ASEAN is currently looking at setting up a robust mechanism in identifying and eliminating “trade-barrier” elements in their non-tariff measures (NTMs) through the Regional Work Programme on NTMs. ASEAN will also set-up an ASEAN Trade Repository (ATR) to provide comprehensive trade related information of all ten Member countries, linking all the National Trade Repositories to provide support to the private sector and ease trade transactions across the region.

On integration into the global economy, following the launch of RCEP negotiations in November 2012, ASEAN and our FTA partners have engaged in two rounds of negotiations this year. Three working groups on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Investment as well as three sub-working groups on rules of origin and customs procedures and trade facilitation have been established. Discussions are also ongoing in the other areas, such as competition policy, intellectual property, economic and technical cooperation, and dispute settlement. The next round of negotiations is scheduled for January next year.

ASEAN Connectivity

By 2015, we expect to complete 76.8% of the 125 measures in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, encompassing its three dimensions of physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity.

In facing the daunting challenge of financing ASEAN Connectivity projects, we have been working with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and other multilateral institutions to explore resource mobilization opportunities. We are also pleased to know that APEC economies will be putting in place a framework on infrastructure investment for connectivity and guidelines to deliver bankable projects. In this regard, forging ASEAN-APEC cooperation on connectivity, particularly in the area of public-private partnerships (PPP), could lay the foundation in attracting financing for connectivity projects in both regions.

Sustainable Development

ASEAN has an enduring commitment to promote and integrate sustainable development in the Community building process. We are demonstrating that the process of economic integration from 2000 to 2011 had been pursued desirable economic and socio-cultural outcomes such as decrease in poverty incidence, increase in life expectancy, improvement in health, greater education opportunities, investments in environmental sustainability and enhanced disaster resilience, among others.

As regards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while there has been uneven progress across sub-regions and countries, the ASEAN region as a whole has recorded remarkable achievements. ASEAN is also committed to playing a proactive role in addressing climate change issues as reflected in various Leaders' Statements and the ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Change.

Equitable Economic Development

Through initiatives such as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and other sub-regional economic programmes, ASEAN is helping narrow the development gaps by pursuing equitable economic development in the region. We are pleased to note that through regional and national efforts, the CLMV countries' share of the combined GDP of ASEAN has grown from 3.5% in 1990 to nearly 12% at present. On the basis of the results of the Mid-Term Review of the IAI Work Plan II for the period 2009-2015, ASEAN will identify concrete and practical measures to fast-track the completion of the IAI's objectives and clear recommendations on future direction.

ASEAN's equitable economic development efforts are also focused on building the capacities of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and enhancing their access to finance. By November 2013, we will launch the SME Guidebook towards AEC 2015 with a view to fostering awareness and understanding of ASEAN's integration efforts.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates

As ASEAN and APEC are striving for the same objective of economic integration for sustainable development with equity and inclusive economic growth and developing our respective beyond-2015 agendas, we are also sharing many same priorities such as promoting trade facilitation, connectivity, investment, disaster management, food security, SME development and capacity building. These constitute potential areas of cooperation. We look forward to working with the APEC Secretariat to explore and realize these potentials.

I thank you!