

Secretary-General's closing remarks at the 8th ASEAN-UN Summit

[as prepared]

Vientiane, 7 September 2016

Your Excellency, Thongloun SISOULITH,
Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Chair of ASEAN in 2016,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government of ASEAN,
Your Excellency, Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your kind suggestions.

The deliberations on the Plan of Action have demonstrated our shared principles and our shared vision for our partnership.

In this first year of the ASEAN Community, the world has further witnessed the importance of ASEAN on the regional stage and its potential as an emerging global player.

Before arriving here, I visited Myanmar, where I saw encouraging progress. I also stopped in Singapore – an anchor of stability and an engine of growth in the region. These two countries are very different, but they share the same vision of stability, unity, and people-oriented development that is at the heart of ASEAN's success.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to recognise ASEAN's growing engagement in peace and security cooperation, particularly your contributions to UN peace operations.

Eight ASEAN member states are now contributing more than 4,800 military personnel, police and civilians to United Nations peacekeeping operations. I thank you for those contributions and I encourage your further support.

Here in this region, ASEAN members have made determined efforts to end conflict. Important hand inclusive peace processes are underway in Myanmar and in the Philippines, with the support of other states and civil society.

I am also encouraged that efforts continue towards dialogue and peace in southern Thailand.

I would like to pay tribute to Tengku Datu Abdul Ghaffar, who sadly passed away last week, after playing a key role as the facilitator in the Bangsamoro Peace Process.

Tengku Datu Abdul Ghaffar was an exemplary peacemaker and an inspiration to all working for peace in ASEAN and the UN.

I also strongly encourage ASEAN to play its full part as a regional organization at the international level, in mobilizing the political will to prevent conflict.

This is an urgent priority for the international community, emphasized in several recent

United Nations reports on peace operations, peacebuilding, and women, peace and security, and at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul earlier this year.

I thank the Government of Lao PDR for agreeing to host the first United Nations training course on Preventive Diplomacy and Peacemaking for the Asia-Pacific region later this year, and hope that all ASEAN member states will participate.

Excellencies,

Turning to broader regional peace and security issues, in particular maritime issues, I commend ASEAN members for addressing regional tensions through peaceful dialogue.

In the South China Sea, I have consistently urged all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and resolve their disputes in a peaceful manner, through dialogue and in conformity with international law.

We look forward to the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties and the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Globalisation and regional integration mean that the ASEAN community is increasingly confronted with the same threats that face the rest of the world.

Effective solutions to these challenges require the maturity and political will of ASEAN's leadership.

I am extremely concerned that terrorism and violent extremism have emerged to challenge governments and civil society in recent years, here and around the world.

I thank ASEAN and its member states for your commitment to working with the United Nations to address this threat through increased regional and international cooperation.

I strongly encourage all ASEAN members to implement the relevant recommendations of the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which focus on increasing dialogue and preventing conflict, fostering education, strengthening good governance and on engaging communities, including women and young people.

Protecting human rights, including the freedom of religion and freedom of expression, must be an integral part of preventing and countering violent extremism.

The United Nations stands ready to work closely with ASEAN on this, including through the upcoming ASEAN-UN Regional Dialogue on conflict prevention and the prevention of violent extremism.

Excellencies,

ASEAN and the UN are also working together to address the impact of transnational crime on the ASEAN region. The financial benefits to transnational organised crime are more than the GDP of several ASEAN countries.

Drug-trafficking is a particular concern for the ASEAN region that requires a coordinated response with due respect for human rights and attention to the treatment and rehabilitation for drug users.

We know this works, and we also know that organized crime will continue to flourish if demand is not dealt with in the right way.

Networks that engage in trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling threaten security around the world. The UN stands ready to work closely with ASEAN on implementing the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Thanks in part to actions taken by leaders and governments in this region, we have not seen a repeat of the heartbreaking scenes of migrants and refugees stranded at sea that we saw in 2015.

However, irregular migration remains a challenge and the United Nations stands ready to provide support to ASEAN to identify and establish comprehensive regional solutions.

I urge all ASEAN member states to engage at the Summit on Refugees and Migrants to be held in New York on 19th September.

I welcome the progress made by ASEAN and the UN on coordinating humanitarian response. The Asia-Pacific region is especially exposed to natural disasters, and our two organizations have responded through the ASEAN-UN Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management, agreed earlier this year and launched at the World Humanitarian Summit.

The United Nations seeks greater collaboration with ASEAN to address the whole range of humanitarian issues affecting the region.

I also commend ASEAN's leading role in the newly-launched Regional Organisations Humanitarian Action Network.

Environmental sustainability and climate action are additional areas that require close cooperation between our two organizations. The ASEAN-UN Work Plan on Environment and Climate Change, which is awaiting final endorsement, will help to support the implementation of regional actions.

Excellencies,

During my time as Secretary-General, I have travelled to the ASEAN region many times and have strong and vivid memories of your warmth and hospitality, your resilience and your strength and your cooperation.

Together, we have succeeded in making important improvements for the lives of the people of this region, and I commend you for your leadership and commitment.

I thank His Excellency, Prime Minister Sisoulith, the Chair of ASEAN, and all the Leaders of ASEAN for your support, your companionship and your understanding throughout my tenure.

And I wish the ASEAN-UN partnership continued success in promoting peace, sustainable development and respect for human rights.

Thank you.

