

## **Secretary-General's opening remarks at the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-UN Summit [as delivered]**

*Vientiane, 7 September 2016*

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

It is a great honour to join you for the 8th ASEAN-UN Summit in the beautiful city of Vientiane.

Prime Minister Sisoulith, let me congratulate the Government and people of Lao PDR for your success in chairing ASEAN since the establishment of the ASEAN Community at the start of this year.

With its upcoming 50th Anniversary, we can look back on ASEAN's many achievements and look forward to further successes. ASEAN has a vital and growing role to play in ensuring peace and stability among your membership and beyond.

Regional organizations such as ASEAN can also be invaluable in meeting the challenges of sustainable development, climate change and the promotion and protection of human rights.

ASEAN's growing integration will give it a more powerful, unified voice on all these issues.

Excellencies,

I am pleased that, during my 10 years as Secretary-General of the United Nations, there has been excellent progress in building strong ties between ASEAN and the United Nations.

Since the Comprehensive Partnership agreement of 2011, political and technical cooperation has deepened.

The first ASEAN-UN Plan of Action has been developed and approved, and encompasses a broad range of areas for engagement.

I particularly welcome the focus on cooperation across sectors, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The ASEAN-UN Plan of Action will advance the two major agreements reached last year for people, planet, prosperity, partnership and peace.

The 2030 Agenda is based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals, from ending hunger and poverty, to achieving gender equality and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Paris agreement on Climate Change tackles the defining issue of our times. I thank you all for signing.

This ASEAN-UN Plan of Action gives us the opportunity to further the complementarity of ASEAN's Community Vision 2025 with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Now we need the resources to put this plan into action.

In this regard, I would strongly encourage all the ASEAN leaders to establish a coordinating mechanism under your direct leadership to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the SDGs by your governments.

We look for ASEAN countries to play a full role in realizing this agenda. I also look forward to the outcomes of your Special Session of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on Sustainable Development at UN Headquarters later this month.

Let me also congratulate Lao PDR for the official launch today of its own national SDG; number 18 on removing Unexploded Ordnance, which reflects our shared goals of peace, people-centred sustainable development and respect for human rights.

This afternoon, I had the opportunity of visiting a training school to demine these unexploded ordnance. I was very much impressed by the strong commitment and the high quality of these training facilities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I also urge you to ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as soon as possible, preferably by the end of this year.

I am grateful to Prime Minister Sisoulith and the Government of Laos for depositing with me this morning the legal instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement. Laos is the first ASEAN country to deposit its document. I hope others will follow this example. And I thank you, Mr Prime Minister, for your leadership.

If I may say a few words more: twenty-seven countries as of now have ratified the agreement, accounting for some 39, a little bit over 39 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. We need 28 more countries to ratify, accounting for a further 16 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, to bring this agreement into force. This is the ambition of the United Nations, to make this climate change agreement enter into force at the latest by the end of this year. If 9 more ASEAN countries ratify, we will have just 19 more countries to go, I am counting on your leadership.

I am convening a special summit meeting on 21 September at UNHQ in New York to accelerate the ratification process.

Both the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda are founded on respect for human rights and democracy, which are gaining ground throughout this region. I would also like to encourage leaders to work for equality, inclusivity and accountability in your governments and societies.

We must now explore ways to mainstream human rights across all areas of the ASEAN-UN partnership.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, and your Majesty,

I call on all to continue your work towards peace, prosperity, sustainable development and human rights for all.

I commend your achievements and call for your support to build and strengthen the ASEAN-UN partnership, for the good of this region and the world.

I look forward to an open exchange of views.

Thank you very much.

