Check against delivery

STATEMENT OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

for the

THE SECOND COMMITTEE
74th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

on

AGENDA ITEM 24
(AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION)

Delivered by

Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

to the United Nations

11 October 2019, New York

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF ASEAN
ON AGENDA ITEM 24 (AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION)
11 OCTOBER 2019

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and my own country, Myanmar.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption of the Political Declaration by all member states of the United Nations is of utmost importance, reflecting the commitments by our Heads of State and Government at the First SDG Summit held during the high level week of the 74th UNGA.

We should, therefore, redouble our efforts to translate these commitments into reality between now and 2030 to achieve concrete results in improving the quality of life of people, the protection of the environment and reduction of inequalities. We, ASEAN countries, reaffirm our resolve to strive for achieving the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Agriculture is the key to the economic development of ASEAN. Agriculture sector provides not only food security but substantial income and employment to the rural population of the region which represent majority. Without the development of this important sector, we will remain far from achieving poverty eradication and Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite its advantages, the agriculture sector in ASEAN has seen a slowdown in growth and faced many challenges, particularly the effect of climate change, disadvantages in market and a development gap with other regions in the world. Rapid urbanization and industrialization in the region also pose many problems for the sector.

Regional initiatives have been designed to effectively address the challenges of the sector. ASEAN adopted the Strategic Plan for ASEAN cooperation in food, agriculture and forestry during 2016-2025. Significant achievements have been made in enhancing trade facilitation and ensure food security, food safety, better nutrition and equitable distribution.

We recognize the role of private sector in harnessing technology and accessing to markets to improve productivity and competitiveness in the agricultural sector, as well as to ensure sustainability and inclusiveness. ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Public-Private Partnership Regional Framework for Technology Development in the Food, Agriculture and Forestry (FAF) to increase collaborative investment in sustainable technology development.

Increased Investment in Agriculture is important to help achieve food and nutrition security, to improve food safety, and to create economic growth and opportunities. We adopted the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry to promote investment in food, agriculture and forestry in the ASEAN region.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary General's Report notes that 821 million people do not have access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. This figure gets the global alarm on the urgent need to pay special attention to securing food security.

ASEAN is considered as a food surplus region. However, rapid population growth which is estimated to reach 800 million in 2035, accelerated urbanization, impacts of climate change and degradation of natural resources has brought adverse impacts on food security and serious concern on possible socio-economic impacts on its member states.

Recognizing the need to enhance cooperation among ASEAN member States to ensure food security through food production we adopted the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Food Security (SPA-FS) 2015-2020. We believe that the framework and plan of action will ensure long-term food security, nutrition and to improve the livelihoods of farmers in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

We should not overlook the fact that agriculture and food security are particularly vulnerable to impacts of climate change. Recognizing that Southeast Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world in terms of adverse climate change impact, all ASEAN member states endorsed the Multi Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food and Nutrition Security and Achievements of SDGs (MSFCC) at the 40th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry held in October last year. This Framework will greatly contribute to food security through sustainable, efficient and effective use of land, forest, and aquatic resources by minimizing the risks and impacts of climate change in agriculture and forestry sector.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that global partnership is critical to address the challenges on agricultural development and food and nutrition security. ASEAN has established the ASEAN plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTEER) which is the main mechanism for strengthening regional food security and reducing poverty. We are also implementing ASEAN plus Three cooperation strategy on Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025. Visible progress has been made in the area of food security, sustainable forest management, climate change mitigation and adaptation, animal and plant health and disease control and human resource development.

ASEAN is closely working with the international organizations namely Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and World Economic Forum (WEF) for the implementation of the strategic plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025.

Mr. Chairman,

Without the agricultural sector development and food security, the task of eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development will not succeed. ASEAN, therefore, reiterates its strong commitments to making our contributions to the collective efforts of international community towards ending hunger, sustainable agriculture and global food security for all.

I thank you.