

**Co-Chairs' Press Statement of
the Second ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development:
Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
10 February 2020, Brussels**

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The second **ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development: Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals** was successfully convened in Brussels on 10 February 2020. It brought together senior representatives and experts of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of the European Union (EU), the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Dialogue opened with a high-level segment with statements by **Ms. Jutta Urpilainen** European Commissioner for International Partnerships and H.E. **Mr. Don Pramudwinai**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation. The subsequent thematic discussions were co-chaired by **Mr. Koen Doens**, Director-General for the European Commission department for international cooperation and development, and **Mrs. Busaya Mathelin**, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

The Dialogue built on the conclusions of the inaugural High Level ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development, held in Bangkok on 17 November 2017. It reiterated the importance of continued policy dialogue to promote cooperation on sustainable development in line with the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022.

The Dialogue underlined the following:

1. The European Union and ASEAN reaffirmed that promoting sustainable development, through the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is a priority for both regions. With ten years left to 2030, we are committed to make the coming decade one of action and delivery. This global commitment is an integral part of both the EU and ASEAN regional integration processes and helps to ensure that they are people-oriented and people-centred. The Dialogue welcomed the initiative to identify and enhance complementarities between the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 in this spirit of leaving no one behind.
2. The EU and ASEAN have a longstanding and multi-faceted development cooperation partnership. Over the period 2014-2020, the EU has supported ASEAN regional development with over €200 million and dedicated €2 billion to individual ASEAN Member States. Regional integration, trade, green growth, the environment, agriculture, poverty eradication, natural disaster prevention and response, people-to-people connectivity, gender equality, and human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities, are important areas of ASEAN-EU cooperation to achieve the SDGs.
3. The EU and ASEAN will explore possible cooperation to facilitate the transition to a sustainable economy. The Dialogue welcomed two new initiatives by the EU to promote cooperation on green economy, announced by Commissioner Urpilainen during the opening segment of the Dialogue. The EU is preparing to contribute to the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility in line with the European Green Deal and in close coordination with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and European Financial Institutions. A partnership between the EU and the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDDSD) will enhance policy dialogue on sustainable consumption and production.

4. The EU and ASEAN agreed that the global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation require a global response, ambitious policies and enhanced collective efforts, particularly in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The Dialogue discussed ways to enhance cooperation, including on technology and knowledge sharing, in the fields of sustainable production and consumption, circular economy, clean energy, sustainable fisheries, biodiversity, combating marine debris, sustainable use of peatland forest, transboundary haze pollution, and smart and sustainable cities. The Dialogue also highlighted the important contribution of green and sustainable finance as promoted by the International Platform on Sustainable Finance since 2019 and the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility under the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund.

5. The Dialogue addressed the importance of regional integration and the development of human capital in narrowing development gaps. Connectivity was identified as a cross-cutting concept that can promote both regional inclusive growth and the achievement of the SDGs. Strong EU-ASEAN cooperation already exists in this field, and there are potential synergies between the ‘Connecting Europe and Asia: The EU Strategy’ on the one hand, and the ‘Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025’, including through the ‘Connecting the Connectivities’ approach, on the other hand. The two sides agreed to continue their exchanges on physical connectivity such as digital infrastructure, road transport, science and research cooperation, and people-to-people connectivity.

6. Promoting gender equality, and in particular the empowerment of women and girls, is an important priority for both ASEAN and the EU. The Dialogue highlighted, as key to reaching these objectives, strengthening the financial inclusion of women and promoting women entrepreneurship, especially in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The EU and ASEAN also appreciated the importance of forging partnerships in promoting sustainable development and localising the SDGs.

7. The EU and ASEAN expressed their intention to strengthen their partnership on sustainable development to a more advanced level, including through establishing the ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development as a regular format. The third ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development is expected to be convened in 2021, to review concrete initiatives and joint progress in the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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