

Keynote Address
by H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN
at the Conference on the “EU and ASEAN: Prospects for Future
Cooperation”

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Kingdom of Belgium,*
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*Mr. **Fraser Cameron**, Director of the EU-Asia Centre,*
Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

1. I would like to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium and the EU-Asia Centre for inviting me to this Conference which gives us an opportunity to deliberate on future cooperation between the EU and ASEAN, two of the most successful and dynamic regional organizations that share many same goals and interests in all major spheres of international activities. In striving to prosper together and further strengthen our cooperation for such common interests, it is important that we share each other's experiences and visions. As such, I consider this conference important and timely and look forward to its success.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

2. With little more than two years from the deadline of December 2015 for the establishment of the ASEAN Community, ASEAN's Community building and integration efforts have picked up speed,

vigour and intensity in tandem. Much of the efforts has been focused on implementing the remaining regional commitments across all the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. In implementing the Road Map for an ASEAN Community (2009-2015), ASEAN has achieved substantial progress. The remaining 32 action lines in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint are being addressed by ASEAN Member States. By the end of September 2013, approximately 80% of the measures due under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and 90% of those due under the ASEAN Social-Cultural Community Blueprint have been implemented. Efforts in bridging development gaps have doubled the proportion of the total GDP of the four new members in the combined GDP of ASEAN from less than 6% to nearly 12%. With such progress, ASEAN has strengthened itself as a platform for dialogue and cooperation to preserve and enhance peace and security, a locomotive for open trade, investment and economic growth in the region while maintaining its central role in the evolving regional architecture

2. Against the backdrop of those significant achievements, the ASEAN Leaders, at their 23rd ASEAN Summit held last week, emphasized the need to enhance efforts towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community and in their Declaration on the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision reaffirmed that ASEAN's Community building and integration will be further deepened and broadened. The ASEAN Community is envisaged to pursue the realization of a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible ASEAN, closing of the development gap through effective

implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and Millennium Development Goals, the creation of a peaceful and prosperous region, free of conflict, weapons of mass destruction and drugs, an ASEAN in which the nations and peoples of the Association live in a caring and sharing society, bound by enduring solidarity and unity, where the wellbeing, livelihood and welfare of its peoples are enhanced; and the strengthening of ASEAN's institutions, through among others, the provision of adequate resources and support, as well as greater efficiencies.

3. In external relations, the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision envisages further invigoration of ASEAN's relations with dialogue partners aimed at forging more effective, equal and meaningful partnerships, strengthening of ASEAN's central position and leadership in the evolving regional architecture and more active and constructive involvement of ASEAN in global affairs of common interest and concern.

4. As for the timeline for the ASEAN Community's post-2015 Blueprint or roadmap, negotiations and the development of the document will begin next year and is expected to be finalised and launched by the Leaders of ASEAN by the end of 2015.

5. While concrete elements are still to be developed by the ASEAN Coordinating Council in coordination with the three ASEAN Community Councils and to be adopted by the Leaders of ASEAN through a due process, various ideas enjoying broad support have

been floated on what such an ASEAN Community's post-2015 Vision should encompass.

6. First, based on the shared approach that Community building is a progress, a work in progress rather than an event, the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision should be enhancing and consolidating the ASEAN Community through a continued but deeper and more comprehensive process of integration. The Vision should constitute a continual and integrated process for ASEAN Community building in all the three pillars with a view to ensure their coherence and convergence, especially on cross-cutting issues such as illicit drug trafficking , trafficking in persons, cyber security, disaster management and connectivity. It should build upon the achievements recorded in the implementation of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2009-2015), including the IAI Work Plan II, as well as the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. The ASEAN post-2015 vision should at the same time seek to address the measures therein that have not been implemented.

7. Second, the post-2015 vision should include the Bali Concord III which is aimed at projecting ASEAN's common global platform by 2022, raising ASEAN's profile in the global community through close coordination on key international issues on the global stage. The key characteristics envisage a more coordinated, cohesive, and coherent ASEAN position on global issues of common interest and concern, based on a shared ASEAN global view, which would further enhance ASEAN's common voice in relevant multilateral fora; and an enhanced ASEAN capacity to contribute and respond to key global

issues of common interest and concern which would benefit all ASEAN Member States and their peoples

8. Third, in the same Bali Concord spirit, the ASEAN Community's post-2015 Vision should contain aspirational goals such as that of halving the number of people living in poverty in ASEAN countries and doubling the combined GDP of ASEAN by 2030.

9. Fourth, the ASEAN post-2015 Community should continue its efforts to narrow the development gap among ASEAN Member States with a view to ensuring equitable, balanced and sustainable development among ASEAN Member States.

10. Fifth, recognizing the importance of south-south cooperation, the post-2015 vision should continue ASEAN's outward-looking approach and reach out to new potential partners in the developing world to promote cooperation in areas where developing countries share many same interests and advantages such as poverty alleviation and food and energy security.

11. Sixth, ASEAN needs to preserve ASEAN's unity and enhance ASEAN's central role in the multi-layered, multi-process regional architecture so that ASEAN remains the primary force to chart the future of the region amidst the fast changing and increasingly complex geo-political environment.

12. Seventh, the ASEAN Community' post-2015 Vision should reinforce ASEAN's values, fundamental principles and norms as enshrined in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia

(TAC), the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the future Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, the Bali Declaration on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations.

13. Eighth, the ASEAN Community's post-2015 Vision should aim to build an East Asia that is closely integrated in terms of economy and connectivity, promote multi-layered frameworks with ASEAN connectivity being at the centre. On ASEAN connectivity, ASEAN should focus on the sub-regional arrangements as the springboards to expand connectivity to the region.

14. Ninth, beyond 2015, ASEAN Member States will at the same time implement their own new development and integration agenda and that of the United Nations. The ASEAN Community's post-2015 Vision with regard to development and continued implementation of the Millennium Development Goals should be aligned to the UN's post-2015 development agenda in which the issues of economic growth, social development and environmental protection must be reconciled and integrated at the planning, development and implementation stages.

15. In order to realize such a vision, ASEAN needs to strengthen its institutional framework. To this end, ASEAN must strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat, enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of ASEAN organs and institutions. Ideas have also been floated that ASEAN should consider institutional changes to streamline and

rationalise ASEAN meetings, mechanisms and institutions through the review of the ASEAN Charter with a view to making them more effective.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

16. ASEAN attaches great importance to its long-standing relationship with the EU. As ASEAN is intensifying its efforts to achieve the goal of building the ASEAN Community by 2015, ASEAN and the EU have been pursuing mutually beneficial relations and cooperation. As a result of the implementation of the measures due under the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community, ASEAN is becoming more integrated and more attractive to global, regional and local investment. ASEAN has been experiencing its strongest economic growth since the Asian financial crisis. For this year, ASEAN is projected to grow between 5.3 to 6% following a rosy growth rate of 5,7% last year. FDI inflows into the region have also kept increasing since the crisis bucking against the global downtrend, reaching 108.2 billion US dollars last year. At the same time, intra- ASEAN FDI net inflows soared significantly, reaching 20 billion US dollars or a share of 18.5% of total FDI inflows in 2012. Such resilience and strength of the ASEAN economies and the encouraging progress achieved across all the four sub- pillars of the ASEAN Economic Community pillar, especially those in the areas of trade facilitation, capital market development, food security, pro-competition, intellectual property rights rules and regulations and infrastructure development, the prospect of ASEAN having in place the ASEAN Community by December 2015 when the ASEAN single market will be part of a

much larger single market established under the Regional Economic Partnership accounting for half of the world' population and one third of the world' GDP and such a comprehensive ASEAN Community's post-2015 vision are and will be offering great potentials for enhanced cooperation between ASEAN and its partners.

17. The EU remains an important partner of ASEAN, being one of its major trading partners and sources of FDI inflows. In fact, despite the continued impact of the global financial and economic crisis together with that of the UROZONE, ASEAN-EU trade and investment relations have continued to flourish. The ASEAN-EU partnership has continued to strengthen. Programmes such as the ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE) and Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (READI) are examples of development assistance that can contribute to greater policy coordination and coherence in support of ASEAN's regional integration and Community building, in both trade and non-trade areas.

18. We hope that the EU will continue to support ASEAN in pursuing its post-2015 agenda. This may be done, among others, by aligning the future ASEAN-EU plan of action with the ASEAN Community post-2015 document. Furthermore, the future ASEAN-EU cooperation programmes and project designs should correspond to the new developments, requirements and needs in the new stage of ASEAN Community.

19. Looking ahead, ASEAN and the EU could, among others, focus on the following:

- Enhancing ASEAN-EU consultations/cooperation in multilateral fora, including in the United Nations and other bodies within the UN system and ASEM in order to strengthen the multilateral system and, where appropriate, to develop joint positions.
- Continuing dialogue and closer coordination on regional and international issues. The strengthened political dialogue between ASEAN and the EU will contribute to advancing the common interest of ASEAN and the EU in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia Pacific region.
- Continuing to promote two-way trade and investment. This should include the continuation of the ASEAN-EU trade consultations and organization of ASEAN-EU business summits, resumption of the negotiations on an ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement upon realisation of the ASEAN Economic Community by the end of 2015.
- Strengthening cooperation in connectivity by supporting the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC). In this regard, ASEAN looks forward to learning from the EU's experience in advancing physical infrastructures, communications systems and advanced technologies.
- Promoting further people-to-people connectivity and interaction through a more favourable visa programme and waiver for

diplomats, officials, business persons, students, professionals and tourists.

20. The more prosperous ASEAN, the more benefits it would bring to Europe and the EU. I am confident that both the EU and ASEAN regions will continue to benefit from our dynamic partnership. Sustained political will from the policy-makers of both sides is vital to take our ties to a new height. I hope and am confident that conferences such as the one we have today will contribute to sustain and strengthen that political will of our policy- makers.

Thank you for your kind attention!

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