

**Co-Chairs' Press Statement of
the Inaugural High-Level ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development:
Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
17 November 2017, Bangkok**

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The inaugural *High-Level ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development: Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals* was successfully convened in Bangkok on 17 November 2017, gathering Ministers and senior representatives of the Member States of ASEAN and of the European Union, the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Dialogue was co-chaired by Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, as ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation and Country Coordinator for ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations, and Mr. Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development.

While reaffirming the importance of further strengthening the ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership, notably in the year 2017 marking the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations, and recalling the decision of the 21st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting held in Bangkok in October 2016 to convene an ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development in 2017 as a platform to promote cooperation on the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change,

the Dialogue underscored the following:

1. Promoting sustainable development, through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), remains a critical priority area for both ASEAN and the European Union (EU). This is a global commitment shared by ASEAN and the EU and an integral part of both the EU and ASEAN regional integration processes, helping to ensure that they are people-centered and leave no one behind.
2. The EU and ASEAN already have a longstanding and successful development cooperation partnership, spanning across a broad range of policy areas. The EU has significantly increased development cooperation funding in support to ASEAN regional integration to €170 million in the period 2014-2020, in addition to over €2 billion funding to ASEAN Member States bilaterally over the same period. Further advancing ASEAN-EU cooperation at bilateral and regional levels, as well as partnership in multilateral fora on key global issues of sustainable development was recognized as having enormous potential. This potential can be enhanced through continuing an effective dialogue on development strategies as well as through concrete cooperation initiatives, based on mutual interests and shared commitments to attaining the SDGs. Achieving SDGs will require mobilising domestic and international, public and private financial resources.
3. At the Dialogue, three new EU cooperation programmes with a volume of EUR 85 million were launched. Two EU-ASEAN programmes: the Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument (E-READI, EUR 20 million) to further strengthen EU-ASEAN policy

dialogues; and the flagship programme on economic and trade connectivity in support of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 (ARISE Plus, EUR 40 million). The third is the EU programme on promoting women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in ASEAN (EUR 25 million), helping to ensure labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region. This programme will be implemented as part of the new global EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

4. The ASEAN initiative to enhance complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 were welcomed as important tools that would help contribute to the attainment of the SDGs.

5. The Dialogue was focused on several areas identified as important cross-cutting development catalysts towards the achievement of multiple SDGs, namely: promoting gender equality and particularly the empowerment of women and girls as a key driver of change; promoting green growth and circular economy, including environmentally sustainable and climate resilient cities, sustainable consumption and production and addressing the challenges of climate change. Regional integration processes as a tool for narrowing the development gap were also discussed. Furthermore, building on the commitments of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of 2015 and in line with the new European Consensus on Development adopted in 2017, the participants exchanged views on traditional and innovative engagement modalities that could be explored in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including triangular and South-South cooperation.

6. The 2030 Agenda highlights that multi-stakeholder participation in effective, accountable and transparent decision making processes at all levels is key to building sustainable and resilient societies. The Dialogue recognized the important role of the private sector and the civil society and academia in promoting sustainable development and localizing the SDGs. The importance of promoting these networks of cooperation in sustainable development among the ASEAN and the EU was welcomed.

7. The two sides agreed to follow-up on this first Dialogue meeting by exploring concrete development cooperation initiatives, in particular in the areas discussed, developing a roadmap on ASEAN-EU Sustainable Development Cooperation in line with the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022, using the already ongoing and the newly launched regional programmes, in particular the new E-READI policy dialogue facility platform. Concrete initiatives to support these areas through triangular or South-South cooperation could also be explored. In this context, the idea of the development of an ASEAN centre to promote sustainable development studies and dialogue, as reflected in the Report on Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was presented.

8. The next high level ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development is expected to be convened in 2019, to review progress in further enhancing cooperation between ASEAN and the EU on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

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