

**Opening Remarks by  
H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Kingdom of Thailand  
at the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development  
Thursday, 18 November 2021 at 15.00 hrs.**

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**Excellencies, Distinguished participants,**

1. Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Sustainable Development. As the **ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation**, it is my great pleasure to once again co-host this event with my dear colleague, Commissioner Urpilainen.
2. Since we last met at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dialogue in February 2020, the **COVID-19** pandemic has continued to pose a great challenge to our lives and livelihoods as well as our efforts to realise our development objectives. It has exposed deep-rooted inequalities and imbalances in the way we live which are responsible for environmental degradation and **climate change**. Our inadequate actions now would be costly for our survival in the future. At COP26, Thailand joined the international community's call for stronger commitment and announced our target to reach **carbon neutrality in 2050 and net zero emissions by 2065**.
3. Against this backdrop, the **ASEAN-EU strategic partnership** must further prioritise our cooperation on **climate action, sustainability and sustainable development**. And in a broader context, such cooperation is also **vital to peace, stability and prosperity** of our regions and the world at large, consistent with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
4. The race against time has already begun. Now is the time for ASEAN and the EU to redouble our efforts and intensify our cooperation to overcome these pressing challenges together and turn the crises into collective SDG actions in order to **"build back better, greener and stronger"**.
5. Going forward, **robust recovery and the SDGs can and should be pursued together** in a complementary manner. In this regard, I wish to share

some ideas on how ASEAN and the EU can work together to advance the sustainability agenda.

6. **First, a paradigm shift is needed for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth.** The “New Normal” has hastened us to make a clean break from the current unsustainable way of living. COVID-19 and existential environmental challenges are indeed a wake-up call. We must aim for a “**Balance of All Things**” that moves away from the “Me First” mindset that emphasizes zero-sum gains, towards a “We First” society that strives for socio-economic equality as well as harmony between humans, the way we live, and nature.

7. To this end, the “**Bio-Circular-Green or BCG Economy Model**” can be part of the solution. Thailand has introduced the BCG Economy Model as an alternative strategy for ASEAN’s post-COVID-19 recovery, focusing on economic growth based on efficient use of resources, responsible consumption and production, waste reduction and low-carbon emissions.

8. The BCG Economy complements the green policies and strategies of ASEAN and EU Member States, including the European Green Deal, which brings me to my **second point** about **collaborative partnership**. Advancing the sustainability agenda **requires cooperation and transformation from all sectors** in the society, such as change in individual behaviour, change in business conduct, and community empowerment. To achieve this, we must raise **public awareness** and campaign for **sustainability as a common agenda** where every one of us has a part to play. And that is why engagement of international organisations, academics, civil society, youth and volunteers, who are also present here, is crucial.

9. Next year, Thailand plans to organise an **ASEAN BCG Knowledge Sharing Series** where experts from external partners, including the EU, will be invited to share their best practices with ASEAN on thematic areas related to the BCG Economy. Certainly, the BCG Economy can be another potential area of ASEAN-EU cooperation.

10. Thailand also encourages the EU to cooperate with us to further promote multi-stakeholder partnership through “**Public-Private-People Partnership**” on **resource mobilisation** as well as **green and climate finance**. In this regard, we welcome the contribution by the EU, EIB, AFD and KfW to the **ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility**, which has been utilised to fund climate-

positive and green infrastructure projects in ASEAN. We also recognise the EU as the largest contributor of climate finance to developing countries and hope that ASEAN Member States can have adequate access to such funds as well as cutting-edge technology and capacity-building.

11. **My third and last point** highlights the need for ASEAN-EU cooperation on digital technology and innovation, which is essential for creating an enabling ecosystem for sustainable and balanced growth. Our transition to a low-carbon society depends on technological innovation that will allow us to optimize resource use, transform waste into wealth, and build carbon-neutral supply chains from production to consumption.

**Distinguished participants,**

12. Looking ahead, I believe that sustainability will continue to gain increasing importance in the ASEAN-EU strategic partnership, as it is an area of our common interest for our shared future. I therefore welcome the EU's launch of the Green Team Europe Initiative for ASEAN today covering many pertinent topics that will certainly contribute to ASEAN's green agenda such as clean energy, circular economy, biodiversity, sustainable food system and green cities.

13. I am convinced that ASEAN can also learn from and cooperate with the EU through various avenues, including this Dialogue, as well as relevant ASEAN institutions such as the **ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue or ACSDDSD**. The "green" alliance between ASEAN and the EU for a sustainable future can form a basis for a potential concrete deliverable of the ASEAN-EU **Commemorative Summit on the occasion of 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ASEAN-EU relations** in 2022.

14. With these remarks, I reaffirm Thailand's commitment to advancing the ASEAN-EU partnership on sustainability, so that we can achieve our shared goal of protecting the Earth which is our only home. There is a Native American saying "we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." We therefore do not have any other choice but to succeed in this endeavor for the sake of our future generations.

15. I thank you.

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