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

15 October 2013, Val Duchesse, Brussels

- Excellency Didier REYNERS, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium;

- Excellency David O’Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer, European External Action Service;

- 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 organisations 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, emphasised 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 realisation of a “people-centred 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, the establishment of a socially responsible ASEAN in which the nations and peoples of ASEAN live in a caring and sharing society, bound by enduring solidarity and unity, where the well-being, 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 its 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, the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision should be enhancing and consolidating the ASEAN Community since community building is an on-going process. 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 its peoples.

8. Third, 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.

10. Fifth, the post-2015 vision should continue ASEAN’s outward-looking approach and reach out to new potential partners in the developing world as this will help promote south-south cooperation in such areas 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’s 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
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(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 (Bali Principles).

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. 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 render them more effective.

15. 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.

16. The EU continues to be an important partner of ASEAN. 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 regional integration and Community building, in both trade and non-trade areas.

17. On behalf of ASEAN, I would like to take this opportunity to convey our deep appreciation to the EU for its support and we hope that the EU will continue to remain as a key partner in supporting ASEAN as we push ahead to implement regional commitments to realise an ASEAN Community.

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 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 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 alike.

**Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,**

20. The post-2015 ASEAN Community while broadening and consolidating itself will also enhance its external relations. ASEAN will continue to maintain its central role in maintaining and key to peace, stability, economic prosperity and economic integration in the region.
and beyond. ASEAN will continue to be a locomotive for open trade, investment and economic growth.

21. ASEAN sees great potentials for further strengthening ASEAN-EU engagement and cooperation. The more prosperous ASEAN, the more benefits it would bring to Europe as the EU remains ASEAN’s third largest trading partner and continues to be ASEAN’s biggest source of foreign direct investment. I am confident that both the EU and ASEAN regions will continue to benefit from this dynamic partnership. Sustained political will from the policy-makers of both sides is vital to take our ties to a new height.

Thank you for your kind attention!