

ASEAN taps on Vision 2025 to support SDGs

Written by Administrator

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25 JUNE 2016, BANGKOK - “ASEAN recognizes the importance of creating synergy between the mutually-reinforcing ASEAN 2025 Blueprints and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the framework of ASEAN-UN cooperation,” said ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General for Socio-Cultural Community H.E. Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee. He spoke this at an interface meeting held on June 23 at the UN office in Bangkok among Thailand’s National ASEAN Secretariat, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Thailand organized the meeting in its capacity as ASEAN Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals. Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Deputy Director-General of ASEAN-Thailand together with Ambassador Busadee Santipitaks, Permanent Representative of Thailand to ASEAN, led the Thai delegation. Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP led the UN side and he was joined by top officials from various divisions of ESCAP such as finance, trade, connectivity and disaster management. Representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam also attended.

Dr. Suriya noted that the SDGs is a shared goal at the multilateral level but also at the regional level and this initiative shows that ASEAN is at the forefront of the effort to achieve the mutually-reinforcing goals of the Blueprints and the SDGs.

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Building on a paper developed by Thailand to highlight the complementarities between ASEAN 2025 Blueprints and SDGs, the meeting elaborated on possible areas of collaboration which include the launching of a joint ASEC-ESCAP preliminary report on the challenges and possible way forward which may be released in 2017 in the Philippines in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN. Both sides also talked about establishing a virtual information center to share experiences and best practices on promoting sustainable development.

Ambassador Santipitaks remarked that this meeting is a concrete step that reiterates the discussion between the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in New York to promote complementarity of ASEAN 2025 and the SDGs. She added that this initiative adds value in terms of developing greater links between what ASEAN Community is building at the regional level and what the global community is trying to achieve with SDGs. She said that the establishment of ASEAN Community last year is an impetus and should propel multilateral cooperation for building a truly people-centered community.

ASEAN 2025 is the successor blueprint to the ASEAN Community Roadmap. It maps out ASEAN's 10-year strategic plan in the three areas of political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars to further deepen and consolidate regional integration. It aims to further improve the region's stability, economic standing and the ASEAN people's standard of living.

In this meeting, both sides reiterated their support towards the achievement of the SDGs which is the United Nation's blueprint for ending poverty in the world and building a sustainable future for all. Its goals are aimed to be achieved by 2030. According to Mr. Zahedi, he is "excited about this phase of our collaboration" and reiterated the UN commitment to support the ASEAN 2025 Blueprints in the context of the SDGs.

At the conclusion of the meeting, ASEAN and the UN agreed to explore the possibility of convening a high-level annual meeting between the two sides to guide and inspire this important cooperation. A declaration between the ASEAN and UN on the complementarities of the two strategic documents will also be considered.

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