Statement by
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On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

On Agenda Item 22: Group of Countries in Special Situations
(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;
(b) Follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries;

At the Economic and Financial Committee of the 71th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 19 October 2016

(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, and my own country, the Lao PDR.

2. ASEAN associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Recognized by the United Nations as Groups of countries in special situations, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) continue to face various challenges such as poverty, highly vulnerable to external shocks and adverse impact of climate change which become major constraints hindering their efforts to realize their national development objectives and meet the agreed global development agendas. Therefore, the development of LDCs and LLDCs must be given a special priority as their needs and challenges would hardly be met and overcome by themselves without support and cooperation from the international community. For this reason, since these groups of countries in special situations were recognized, the programs of action to support their development were adopted in which the current ones are the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) for LDCs and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA). These identified priorities for the LDCs and LLDCs respectively to help them address such challenges so that eventually they will be able to graduate from the status of underdevelopment and address the special needs that stem from their geographical handicaps and structural vulnerabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The global agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted last year is a historic milestone for international community as it set a lofty goal to achieve sustainable development and leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes, among others, the commitment to support and assist the groups of countries in special situations such as the LDCs and LLDCs, through goals and targets to eradicate extreme poverty and that support the
development of these countries. Thus, we are of the view that the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) this year should take into account the special needs and unique challenges of these countries by having a strategic guidance for UN Agencies to support the special development needs of countries in special situation, in particular, to support the implementation of the priorities of the IPoA and VPoA.

Mr. Chairman,

5. As a matter of fact, ASEAN needs to narrow the development gap among its members as a few of them are still in the groups of countries in special situations. Therefore, ASEAN adopted various frameworks and declarations across the three pillars of ASEAN community, including the current Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III; and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 adopted at the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summits in September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. This has significantly contributed to alleviation of poverty, and the promotion of sustainable development in the ASEAN region.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Taking into account its specific development challenges, the groups of countries in special situations need adequate and predictable financial support from development partners as reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) to assist them in the implementation of, and follow-up to, the IPoA, VPoA. In this regard, the fulfillment of all ODA commitments remains a crucial source of external financing for development to LDCs and LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

7. I would like to reaffirm ASEAN’s commitment to cooperate with UN agencies and development partners in our efforts to assist the groups of countries in special situations to realize the goals and objectives of IPoA, VPoA and the agreed international development agendas such as 2030 Agenda. To this end, we call on the development partners to continue to support the groups of countries in special situations in order to enable them to overcome their unique development challenges, thereby helping them to eradicate poverty, graduate from the underdevelopment status and realize their overall development objectives.

I thank you.