

**ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly**

**H. E. John W. Ashe**

**68<sup>th</sup> President of the United Nations General Assembly**

Your Royal Highness,  
Heads of State and Government,  
Ministers,  
Secretary-General,  
Chair of ASEAN,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for inviting me to this meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

I congratulate Brunei Darussalam for excellent work in chairing ASEAN over the past year, and commend your choice of theme for the Chairmanship, "Our People, Our Future Together," which is very fitting and well-connected to the focus of work for the General Assembly's 68th session.

As a key regional organization in Asia, ASEAN is a major player for Asia's multilateral architecture. By promoting regional integration, partnering for development and maintaining regional security, ASEAN is able to advance the goals of its individual members, strengthen the capacity for collective action and provide an example for other regions to emulate.

Throughout this busy week in September, we have had a number of High Level meetings and events where Member States have discussed some key issues facing our international community. Here, I see many linkages and overlap with the priorities of the ASEAN nations and I would like to highlight a few.

One of the primary agenda items this week has been the dual approach to global development of both accelerating action to achieve the MDGs and beginning to map out plans for the post 2015 development agenda.

The agreed goals for the core of the post 2015 development agenda: poverty eradication and sustainable development are also echoed in article 1 of the ASEAN Charter, which speaks to these very same priorities. While the region has had strong economic growth and generally made good progress in achieving the MDGS, we must also be mindful of the inequalities that exist between as well as within countries. As part of the post 2015 development agenda, we will all need to strive for a more balanced and inclusive development so that this economic dynamism can benefit all.

In this context, this morning I appeared before the Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 and China, some of whose members are also members of ASEAN, and I stressed the importance of partnerships and cooperation in reaching development goals and advancing economies.

Likewise, the 2011 Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations calls for (quote) “the participation of all key stakeholders including the public and private sectors, civil society and the UN’s regional commission, funds and programmes, and UN Specialized Agencies in the attainment of the MDGs.” (end quote).

As a successful manifestation of regional cooperation, ASEAN shares similar values with the UN General Assembly in regard to multilateralism and finding joint

solutions to common problems. During this session of the GA, we will explore the role of partnerships in development, and I look forward to hearing about your experiences and recommendations.

Another area in which the ASEAN experience can benefit the rest of the world is regional cooperation for peace and security. Recent upheavals in the Arab world, ongoing conflicts in Africa, in Central Asia, rising tensions in other parts of Asia and security-related problems in Latin America all highlight the pervasive regional challenges, whether political, security related or economic and social. Regional challenges call for regional solutions.

Regional cooperation can be a means of employing preventive diplomacy and for promoting conflict resolution. You have already shown great foresight by constructively supporting the democratisation process and encouraging political stability in your member State of Myanmar, which will chair ASEAN next year.

Closer regional cooperation, including between regional organisations, can furthermore strengthen the collective capacity to address challenges at the global level. It is also an important step in transforming the way multilateral co-operation works.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that right at this moment, Member States are gathered for the first ever High Level Meeting on Disarmament. In the course of this meeting, much consideration is being given to the value of nuclear free weapons zones. I am pleased to note ASEAN's commitment to being a nuclear free weapons zone.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ASEAN represents a best case example of regional cooperation - nations joined together in a spirit of equality to advance prosperity and peace in the region.

While today I have spoken about some of the connections between the UN's agenda this week and your Organization, I should not fail to mention: your nations have been very active and engaged in these events, in the plenaries and roundtables, and I expect the same for the upcoming High Level Dialogue on Migration next week.

I thank you for this participation and I look forward to continued collaboration throughout the upcoming session, as we set the stage for the post 2015 development.

Thank you.