



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

327 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10022  
TEL: (212) 336-0777 FAX: (212) 759-7672



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**Statement by**

**His Excellency Tithiarun Mao**  
**Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative**  
**Kingdom of Cambodia**

**On behalf of**

**The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

**Sixth Committee**

**Agenda Item 84**

**The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels**

**77<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York, 6 October 2022**

**Thank you, Mr. Chair,**

I have the honor to address this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on “Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities,” contained in document A/77/213. The report highlights the work of the UN in terms of strengthening and coordinating rule of law activities at national and international levels, as well as the UN's support to its Member States in promoting rule of law activities globally.

**Mr. Chair,**

ASEAN remained concerned with the continued human cost and suffering as well as the profound socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and acknowledged the ongoing whole-of-government efforts and proactive whole-of-Community approach by ASEAN in advancing collective efforts to respond to and recover swiftly from, COVID-19. We underscore the significance of strengthening cooperation with Dialogue Partners, external partners, and international organizations to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases as well as in preparing for other future public health emergencies.

It is evident that the pandemic has also created new legal challenges in many parts of the world and impelled us to think of ways in responding to this crisis. In this context, ASEAN has embraced and continues to promote the rule of law in all its aspects, and affirms its commitment to peace and security, good governance, and the promotion and protection of human rights, enshrined as fundamental principles and purposes of the ASEAN Charter.

**Mr. Chair,**

As a rules-based inter-governmental organization, ASEAN has long been committed to stability and security in the region. Important treaties, declarations and instruments have paved the way for our success, including the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia of 1976, the Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of 1995, the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea of 2002, the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations of 2011, and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration of 2012 together with the Phnom Penh Statement on its adoption. Moreover, ASEAN Member States continue to work with China towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, within a mutually-agreed timeline.

**Mr. Chair,**

Corruption is a complicated issue that hinders social and economic growth, impairs the efficiency of democratic institutions, and hampers future generations' progress. In this regard, ASEAN's commitment has been demonstrated through the ratification of the

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) by all ASEAN Member States. ASEAN has been actively engaged in anti-corruption efforts with partners in the region, and these joint actions have resulted in the establishment of the South East Asia Parties against Corruption (SEA-PAC) in 2004.

ASEAN reaffirms its expanded focus on good governance, as well as its commitment to sustaining the culture of integrity and anti-corruption at all levels of our governmental interaction. ASEAN strongly believes that transparent and accountable civil service is the foundation of good governance and its open engagement with the private sector and community-based organizations can further promote respect for the rule of law in our region and beyond.

ASEAN encourages further cooperation through existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, including UNCAC, to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels. Such efforts must adhere to the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of states enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

**Mr. Chair,**

ASEAN takes note of the Secretary-General's suggestion to consider a sub-topic on "using technology to advance access to justice for all" for discussion at the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.

ASEAN is of the view that capacity-building, including through the delivery of technical assistance and using digital technologies, remains critical for the promotion of the rule of law and strengthening capacities of member states, as well as for the purpose of ensuring effective, inclusive, and accountable justice institutions. In this connection, we welcome and look forward to the continued support of the United Nations in carrying out activities under the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law.

Before I conclude, I would like to highlight that ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 seeks to promote a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centred community and the rule of law at the national and international levels by nurturing the culture of integrity and anti-corruption among the people in our region. By instilling these principles into the policies and practices of the ASEAN Community, ASEAN strives to promote these objectives through the implementation of relevant instruments as appropriate, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions.

ASEAN would like to reaffirm its commitment to good governance, accessible institutions, transparency and accountability. ASEAN strongly believes that this approach will further promote respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels, which will contribute to greater socio-economic development, peace, justice, and prosperity for all.

**Thank you, Mr. Chair.**