



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BURHAN GAFOOR,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON  
BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST  
ASIAN NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 84, THE RULE OF  
LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
LEVELS, 17 OCTOBER 2024**

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Thank you, Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the ten Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

2. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to upholding multilateralism, as well as the rule of law and a rules-based international order in responding to increasingly complex global challenges.

3. ASEAN thanks the Secretary-General for his report on "Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities", contained in document A/79/117.

4. The report highlights the work of the United Nations in terms of strengthening and coordinating rule of law activities at national and international levels, as well as the United Nations' support to its Member States in promoting rule of law activities globally. It also calls on Member States to promote, and adhere to, the rule of law within their own borders and internationally, and emphasises in its conclusion that the rule of law is foundational to the United Nations, peace, human rights and prosperity.

Mr. Chair,

5. Our world today is facing increasingly complex and cross-cutting challenges, including challenges to the rule of law among nations, on almost all fronts. The need to uphold the rule of law has never been as urgent as now.

6. 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,

7. As a rules-based inter-governmental organisation, 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 ASEAN's founding document – the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) of 1967, the ASEAN

Charter, which entered into force since 2008, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia of 1976, the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of 1995, the Declaration on the 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. 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 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, within a mutually-agreed timeline.

Mr. Chair,

8. Corruption hinders social and economic growth, impairs the efficiency of democratic institutions, and hampers future generations' progress. ASEAN's commitment to eradicate corruption has been demonstrated through the ratification of the UN 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.

9. 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 organisations can further promote respect for the rule of law in our region and beyond.

10. 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 as enshrined in the UN Charter.

Mr. Chair,

11. ASEAN recognises the importance of "full, equal and equitable participation at all levels in the international legal system", which is the sub-topic of the debate under this agenda item at the present session.

12. ASEAN is of the view that capacity-building, including through the delivery of technical assistance and using digital technologies, is essential for full, equal and equitable participation in the international legal system. It also remains critical for the promotion of the rule of law, 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 UN Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law.

Mr. Chair,

13. Before I conclude, I would like to highlight that the 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.

14. 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.

15. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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