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**STATEMENT
on behalf of members of ASEAN**

**at the 57th Session of
The Commission on the Status of Women**

New York, 4-15 March 2013

by

**H.E. Mrs. Linda Amalia Sari
Minister for Women Empowerment and Child Protection
of the Republic of Indonesia**

**in
General Discussion
under agenda item 3**

Madam Chairperson,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the members of the *Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China.

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for your excellent stewardship of the Commission for the past year. Let me also assure you of ASEAN's support for the work of the Bureau under your leadership to bring this session of the CSW to a successful conclusion.

Madam Chairperson,

ASEAN highly appreciates the consultations that have been conducted in preparation for the 57th session of the CSW, including the *UN Women Stakeholders' Forum* in December 2012 and the *Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Bangkok, on 5 and 6 February 2013*. We believe that such meetings are useful in order to deepen the discussion pertaining to the issue of violence against women, and derive maximum benefit from the difficult lessons learned since the last session of the CSW.

For us, the priority theme "*The Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls*" is not only timely, but also important. Despite the achievements and progress made in our advocacy for women's rights, violence against women and girls continues to occur inside the privacy of homes as well as in public spaces all over the world on a daily basis..

Against this backdrop, ASEAN wishes to strongly reiterate its commitment to eliminating and preventing violence against women. Starting with the *ASEAN Women Leaders' Conference* held in 1975, ASEAN as a region has continued its efforts to safeguard the rights and freedoms of women. To further promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and children in the region, ASEAN formed the *ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Women and Children (ACWC)*, in 2009 at its 14th Summit in Thailand.

Such efforts were further strengthened with the adoption of the *ASEAN Human Rights Declaration* at the Association's 21st Summit in Cambodia in November 2012. This declaration not only recognizes the rights of women as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, it also endorses the rights of children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and vulnerable and marginalised groups.

ASEAN also fully supports the use of policies and programmes within national systems as part of an integrated and holistic approach to strengthen gender mainstreaming and eliminate violence against women. This approach has enabled us to measure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, as reflected in *ASEAN's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* in 2004.

Within this framework for action, we have been formulating mechanisms in four areas of concern to help women who have been victims of violence by providing services to fulfill the needs of survivors; formulating and taking appropriate responses against offenders and perpetrators; understanding the nature and causes of violence against women; and changing societal attitudes and behavior.

Madam Chairperson,

With regard to the review theme of the CSW, “*The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the context of HIV/AIDS*”, ASEAN is committed and has prepared a clear roadmap to attain the goals of “*zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths*” as declared and adopted at its 19th summit in Bali, in November 2011.

Furthermore, through the *Consultative Meeting on HIV and Key Affected Women and Girls: Reducing Intimate Partners’ Transmission of HIV within ASEAN*, held in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in November 2012, ASEAN member states have agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation among themselves to reduce transmission of the HIV in the region, especially among key affected groups of women and girls.

Madam Chairperson,

Of the numerous emerging issues and trends adversely affecting the lives of women, poverty remains by far the main obstacle in the path of their progress. The seriousness of this problem can be seen by the fact that poverty hampers the achievement of the MDGs. ASEAN is well aware that the situation which women and girls face is made considerably more complex by poverty.

In the efforts to eliminate the impact of poverty, ASEAN is committed to assisting its member states to promote and accelerate achievement of the MDGs, as reflected in *the Joint Declaration on the Attainment of the MDGs in ASEAN* which was adopted at its 14th Summit in March 2009, and formed part of *the ASEAN Roadmap for the Acceleration of the MDGs*.

In addressing issues pertaining to poverty eradication, we have developed, in the spirit of “*ASEAN-Help-ASEAN*”, a number of initiatives that include documenting challenges and best practices of ASEAN member states in implementing their respective policies and programmes on rural development and poverty eradication. This compendium of information allows for sharing among member states.

Madam Chairperson,

ASEAN recognises the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in different areas of development to ensure the equitable achievement of social and economic goals, It also continues to support gender mainstreaming as essential for securing human rights and social justice for women and men. Hence, ASEAN reiterates its commitment to promote gender equality and

women empowerment as reflected in *the Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children* in October 2010.

ASEAN has also developed and implemented a number of regional projects and activities in keeping with *the Work Plan of the ASEAN Committee of Women 2011-2015* to promote gender equality, social justice, well-being and rights of women in the region. In addition, to enhance the economic empowerment of women, ASEAN established *the ASEAN Women Entrepreneur Network* at its 11th Meeting of *ASEAN Committee on Women* in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in October 2012. This facility aims to improve the capacity and networking of ASEAN women entrepreneurs.

Madam Chairperson,

It is ASEAN's fervent hope that this Commission will take a leading role in ensuring the inclusion and centrality of women issues in the post-2015 development agenda. Towards this end, ASEAN wishes to emphasize the urgency of addressing equally gender concerns in both developed and developing countries in the post-2015 development agenda as well as in the current session of CSW; with *the Beijing Declaration* and CEDAW as the cornerstone for the work of the Commission.

The fact that CEDAW has not been ratified by all states, is indeed considered as an obstacle to advocacy for and protection of women's rights. Therefore ASEAN encourages the remaining states to ratify CEDAW and enable the Convention to gain a true "universal acceptance", as the basis of legitimation to challenge and put a stop to violent and criminal practices against women.

In conclusion, in recognizing the collective concern to end violence against women, as well the uneven success among States in achieving gender parity, ASEAN calls for the continued synergy and connectivity among stakeholders to pursue our common goal. We should resolutely strive in addressing the challenges that lie ahead, as neither equality-development-nor peace can be achieved, in a society where women and girls live in constant fear of violence.

I thank you.