

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. TRAN DUC BINH**

Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN

43rd General Assembly (GA) of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 21 November 2022

His Majesty NORODOM SIHAMONI, King of Cambodia;

H.E. Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and Chair of ASEAN;

H.E. Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN, President of National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and President of 43rd AIPA;

H.E. Samdech Vibolsena Pheakdei SAY CHHUM, President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia;

***Honourable Speakers of AIPA Member-Parliaments;
Honourable AIPA Secretary-General, Mrs Nguyen Tuong Van;
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for this 43rd AIPA General Assembly.

On behalf of the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, I would like to congratulate the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia for convening the 43rd General Assembly (GA) of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in this beautiful and vibrant city of Phnom Penh. I am certain that the 43rd GA can reinforce the engagement among respective AIPA Member Parliaments.

I commend the National Assembly of Cambodia for choosing the theme **“Advancing Together for Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient ASEAN”** for this year’s General Assembly, which is timely and highly relevant for our region as we step forward in post COVID-19 world. In our efforts to enhance the resilience and sustainable development in the region, ASEAN must strengthen cooperation in and pay greater attention to the protection and development of human capital. I believe that this can be achieved through integrated approaches that bring together all stakeholders, including parliamentarians, policymakers, business captains, industrial leaders and the academia, to tackle barriers at multiple levels in order to strengthen our region’s ability to attract, access, and absorb sustainable technologies and finance.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID19 pandemic and the geo-strategic and geo-economic environment, ASEAN has today emerged stronger, safer, and more resilient as a community. The region's economic outlook is encouraging as trade volumes have returned to the pre-pandemic levels and the regional economy is forecasted to grow by 5% this year and 5.2% in 2023. This positive development is certainly due to ASEAN's collective efforts and effective implementation of the *ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF)* in the five strategies, namely health systems, human security, economic integration, inclusive digital transformation, and sustainability and resilience.

To support the long-term resilience of ASEAN, work to upgrade key economic agreements such as the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) and the Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) has commenced, while plan to implement the Framework on Circular Economy will soon be rolled out. As digital, innovation and technologies play an important role in driving the ASEAN economic integration agenda, ASEAN has been promoting ASEAN Digital Transformation, as a source of growth and new business models to enhance growth and resiliency of regional supply chains as well as to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Together with the implementation of the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)* this year, ASEAN's FTA's with key partners are also being improved with the substantial conclusion of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement upgrade negotiations. ASEAN has also signed the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement (CATA), the world's first bloc-to-bloc air transport agreement.

All these important agreements are testament to ASEAN's principle, efforts and leadership to ensure market openness and to facilitate trade and investment in the region, and no doubt will further open new opportunities by accelerating supply chain integration and resilience, ensure a smooth flow of essential goods in crisis periods, deepen services and investment liberalisation, and support e-commerce/digital transformation.

It is important to ensure that the Agreement is being utilised by businesses effectively. In this regard, ASEAN seeks the support of AIPA Member Parliaments to help implement commitments ASEAN has made, including built-in agenda to pursue economic cooperation.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its establishment 55 years ago, ASEAN has achieved one of our founding fathers' objectives, which is to build Southeast Asia as a region of peace,

stability, and prosperity. Building upon the achievements and success in Community building since 2015, work on formulating an ASEAN Community Vision beyond 2025 has commenced.

I can share with you that the Post-2025 ASEAN Community is envisaged to be more proactive, responsive, and adaptive than ever before in addressing and managing existing and emerging challenges. In practical terms, the Post-2025 ASEAN Community will further improve working methods and approaches in dealing with these challenges, including through strengthening cooperation and coordination among the three Community Pillars to address cross-cutting issues, and to deepen and expand ASEAN's external relations fully cognisant that ASEAN's external partners contribute to ASEAN Community building. This also rides on Samdech President Heng Samrin's point on the importance of parliamentary diplomacy.

Distinguished Guests, Members, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The past 55 years of ASEAN have shown that only by working together can we effectively deliver economic prosperity, social advancement, and long-lasting peace for our region. As parliamentarians, the laws that you enact at the national level will also have an impact on ASEAN, and therefore I humbly request your cooperation to ensure the alignment of your national policies with our regional initiatives.

To do this, closer engagement and cooperation between AIPA and ASEAN is needed. I am glad to participate firsthand in the ASEAN-AIPA Hearing to be convened tomorrow. I am certain this interface would pave the way to a better ASEAN-AIPA working relationship.

I wish all distinguished delegates good health and the 43rd AIPA General Assembly great success.

I look forward to the enriching discussion at this GA. Thank you.

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