

**79TH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**Sub-regional Dialogue:
“Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific
for Sustainable Development”**

15 – 19 May 2023

**Video Message by
H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn
Secretary-General of ASEAN**

Excellency Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP),

Excellencies, Heads of Regional Organisations,

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organisers for convening today’s sub-regional dialogue of the 79th session of UNESCAP under the theme “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development.”
2. As a region that is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, Southeast Asia is no stranger to droughts, floods, tropical cyclones and other climatic hazards that have become more intense and frequent. The recent heat wave experienced in mainland Southeast Asia is a devastating illustration of the adverse climate change impacts that ASEAN must address.
3. In response to the severe consequences from climate change, ASEAN Member States (AMS) are committed to strengthening regional cooperation and implement international initiatives to combat climate change, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, among others. Significant progress has been made from policies to actions with climate ambition targets set in their respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Indeed, the climate agenda has been high on ASEAN’s agenda as highlighted in almost all ASEAN chairmanship’s high-level statements and regional plans of action.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. In line with the theme of today's meeting of "Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development," allow me to highlight some of ASEAN's collective actions in promoting sustainable development practices as well as in achieving climate change mitigation and adaptation targets, as follows:
5. First and foremost, one of ASEAN's priorities is to advance green growth and low-carbon development strategies. ASEAN has surpassed its aspirational energy target by achieving 21 percent of energy intensity reduction and 13.9 percent renewable energy share in the ASEAN total primary energy supply in 2018. ASEAN aims to raise the proportion of renewable energy in its energy mix to 23 percent by 2025. The *Bandar Seri Begawan Joint Declaration of the 39th ASEAN Ministers on Energy on Energy Security and Energy Transition* further articulates the region's intent to work on an aspirational long-term regional target towards lower emission energy systems to contribute to lowering greenhouse gas emissions.
6. Second, ASEAN continues to develop and promote sustainable transportation in ASEAN. ASEAN Member States are working towards reducing emissions from the transport sector and provide incentives for the private sector to invest in sustainable transport solutions. In addition, several initiatives have been put in place to develop sustainable transport infrastructure such as public transport systems, bicycle paths, and electric vehicles (EVs), including promoting the region as a production base for cleaner vehicles in Southeast Asia.
7. Third, ASEAN continues to strengthen its climate mitigation and adaptation measures in primary sectors. The Strategic Plan of ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025 identifies and prioritises the main areas for cooperation, and proposes Strategic Thrusts and Action Programmes to ensure equitable, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as to increase resiliency to climate change, natural disasters and other shocks, through mitigation and adaptation efforts.
8. Fourth, ASEAN recognises the importance of accelerating its transition to circular economy to contribute to climate targets. ASEAN is implementing the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which identifies five strategic priorities namely, i) standards harmonisation; ii) trade facilitation; iii) innovation and digitalisation; iv) sustainable finance and investments; and v) efficient use of energy and other resources.
9. Fifth, on financing climate action and sustainable development. The ASEAN Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors Meeting has discussed the transition of economic activities and sustainable financial instruments, and

released the ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance Version 2 to strengthen six key sectors to achieving low-carbon economies, in particular by attracting sustainable investment and financing the transition, including energy sector on renewable energy.

10. Finally, ASEAN continues to strengthen knowledge sharing and monitoring mechanisms to promote evidence-based policy decision making processes. A range of regional assessment reports to promote evidence-based decision making on climate change have been produced, including the *ASEAN State of Climate Change Report*, and a *Scoping Study on the Development of Long-Term Low Carbon Development Strategies (LTS) in ASEAN*. ASEAN has also digitalised and disseminated environmental information and data services that are more inclusive and accessible by utilising knowledge sharing platforms such as the ASEAN Environment Knowledge Hub and ASEAN Haze Portal. In addition, given the importance of strengthening climate change research, ASEAN is in discussion on the details towards the establishment of the *ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (ACCC)* in Brunei Darussalam to fill research gaps and provides policy recommendations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. As climate change is a global problem and in line with the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Upholding Multilateralism*, ASEAN will continue to emphasise the need to advance collaboration with other countries and international organisations to effectively address this cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issue, as well as to ensure the effective realisation of the complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In fact, the ASEAN Climate Change Partnership Conference is conducted regularly as a platform to promote coordination and collaboration among various ASEAN sectoral bodies and partners dealing with sectors impacted by climate change.
12. In November 2022 in Cambodia, ASEAN adopted The *ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP-27)*, which further demonstrated our commitment to working together with all relevant stakeholders in order to realise a sustainable, green and climate-resilient development in the region. One of the priorities during Indonesia's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2023 is "*Promoting environmental cooperation to conserve biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of climate change*," therefore, we look forward to the implementation of Indonesia's bold and innovative initiatives as the ASEAN Chair for this year, and guided by the theme of "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth."

13. Let me close by saying that ASEAN is committed to increasing climate actions with the rest of the world and I am confident that if we work together, stand united, and act responsively and positively together, we can deliver the very best of international commitment and bring about tangible benefits to our member states and to the peoples of ASEAN and the world at-large.

Thank you.