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STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. SOVANN KE
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OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

SIXTH COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM 86
THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

75TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 19 OCTOBER 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to address the Sixth Committee today on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

ASEAN would like to thank the Secretary General for his report on "Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities," contained in document A/75/284. The report notes UN action in strengthening and coordinating rule of law activities at national and international levels, while touching on the support the UN provides to its Member States in promotion of rule of law activities globally. Nevertheless, we hope that future reports will be presented in all respects in an objective, neutral and non-partisan manner.

Since the founding of ASEAN in 1967, we have embraced promotion of the rule of law in all its aspects, and we continue to do so to the day. The ASEAN Charter enshrines the fundamental principles and purposes of the rule of law, asserting ASEAN's respect for peace and security, good governance and respect for the promotion and protection of human rights.

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.

In line with the subtopic of discussion on "Measures to prevent and combat corruption," ASEAN would like to note its expanded focus on good governance along with commitment to upholding the culture of integrity and anti-corruption at all levels of our governmental engagement. We strongly believe that transparent and accountable civil service is the backbone 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.

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN takes its anti-corruption efforts seriously. Corruption is complex problem, which undermines social and economic development, negatively impacts the effectiveness of democratic institutions, and hampers progress for future generations. Corruption affects each and every country around the world, and thus must not be associated with any culture or people specifically.

All ten ASEAN Member States have ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which provides a strong basis for anti-corruption action. 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, with the 15th SEA-PAC meeting taking place last October in Bangkok, Thailand.

Our experience shows that successful anti-corruption efforts require strengthening of cooperation and sharing of information among partners, particularly enhanced law enforcement cooperation. This necessitates close compliance with UNCAC obligations, including extradition, mutual legal assistance, and the recovery of assets and proceeds of corruption. Moreover, sharing of experiences, best practices, and exchange of views regarding effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts must be promoted.

Looking into the future, with a view to promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels, ASEAN urges enhancing coordination under existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, including UNCAC. Such efforts must be in full respect of the United Nations Charter, including principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs of States.

We strongly support the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this regard, and look forward to our active engagement in the process leading up to the special session of the General Assembly on the challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation, which is scheduled to take place in 2021.

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 seeks to promote 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, we seek to promote these ideals through implementation of relevant instruments as appropriate, including the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, particularly its goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming ASEAN's commitment to strengthening good governance, accessible institutions, and transparency and accountability. We strongly believe 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. Chairman.