Mr Chairman

1. On behalf of the ASEAN group, I would like to congratulate and welcome Your Excellency as the Chair of the 59th CND.

   • I am confident that under your able leadership, this session will be a positive and fruitful one.

   • ASEAN would also like to extend our appreciation to the Chair of UNGASS Board, His Excellency Ambassador Shamaa, for his dedication and hard work towards the important preparatory work for UNGASS.

   • The ASEAN group assures the CND of its full cooperation and dedication in carrying out its duties and functions.

2. I now seek the Chair's permission to deliver a statement as agreed upon by the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam during the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) held in October 2015.

Affirming the International Drug Conventions

3. ASEAN shares the concern of many in this room on the world drug problem.
• The problem is evolving and nations need to work with one another to tackle this common and shared threat.

• Our leaders had recognised the global nature of this drug problem and formulated three international drug conventions.

• These conventions allowed us to tackle the drug problem together in three ways:
  a. First, it enables a collective determination and response from all nations.
  b. Second, it builds and taps on the collective wisdom of all nations.
  c. Third, it provides a collective platform for all nations to discuss issues, like what we are doing today.

4. While we work collectively on such platforms, we also respect the sovereign right of each state to decide and implement policies that best cater to its individual needs, based on the unique circumstances and norms of its society.

• ASEAN remains steadfast in our dedication to the three international drug conventions as the cornerstone of all drug policies.
• We also pledge equal support to the CND in its role as the principal body for all drug related policies and issues. ASEAN strongly supports this affirmation in the outcome document.

Implementing the Conventions Holistically

5. ASEAN had, over the years, put in our best efforts to implement the conventions. As a result, we have prevented the scourge of drugs from overwhelming our communities, crippling our economies, and robbing our youths of their future.

6. Our collective efforts must continue.

• We are acutely aware of the disastrous effects of drugs, not just on the drug abuser and the society at large, but also on national security and development.

• We are committed to suppress and eliminate the scourge of drugs to achieve the vision of a Drug-Free ASEAN.

7. To achieve this vision, ASEAN has continued to intensify its efforts to implement a comprehensive and balanced approach to tackling drugs, giving equal importance to both demand and supply reduction efforts.
• This approach recognises that a wide spectrum of factors may contribute to the drug problem, such as insufficient family support for individuals or a lack of enforcement effort to reduce supply.

• The overall outcome of our efforts is to protect individuals and families from the dangers of drugs, and wean abusers off their addiction.

8. Our approach includes targeted preventive education to protect our young and vulnerable, as well as rehabilitation and recovery programmes that incorporate scientific evidence-based practices.

• To end the vicious cycle of drug abuse, we also actively engage the community and non-governmental organisations to build support for the effective reintegration of the individuals into the society.

9. We have also undertaken efforts to tackle supply side problems, including taking a tough stance against drug traffickers, with equal importance and urgency.

• For instance, in ASEAN, we have created new platforms, such as an Airport Interdiction Task Force and a regional Narcotics Coordination Centre to enhance joint operations and investigations to disrupt the network of regional drug syndicates.
10. Effective laws have to be implemented in concert with an effective enforcement and criminal justice system.

11. We are confident that with our comprehensive approach, in both demand and supply reduction efforts, we will be able to realise the regional vision of a Drug-Free ASEAN, so as to provide our people and communities with a society free from drug abuse and its ill-effects.

Shared Responsibility

12. With UNGASS approaching next month, ASEAN looks forward to the discussions on policy evaluation and the sharing of best practices.

- We will remain grounded in our work, support the centrality of the international drug control conventions and stand firm against drugs, including being resolute against calls to legalise controlled drugs.

- We will participate actively in all the roundtable sessions, including at the plenary, with this respect and humility.

13. UNGASS reminds us of the responsibility entrusted to us by our countries to work comprehensively together to achieve a society free from drugs.
14. We look forward to the adoption of the outcome document to better achieve the goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

15. In conclusion, the ASEAN group extends our best wishes and cooperation for the 59th CND as well as for a successful UNGASS ahead. Thank you.