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**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Han Thu
Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations
on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
(ASEAN)**

**On Agenda Item 21:
“Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and
strengthening of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)”**

**at the Second Committee of the 67th Session
of the UN General Assembly**

New York, 1 November 2012

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the ten Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao DPR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

ASEAN thanks the comprehensive Report provided by the Secretary-General on the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III), focusing on the implementation of a "new Urban Agenda" for the 21st Century and the strengthening of UN-Habitat.

Mr. Chairman,

As projected by UN Habitat, in little over a generation from now, the two-thirds of the global population will be living in towns and cities as the fastest urbanization in history. Today, the main challenges facing cities and towns are unemployment, social and economic inequalities, unsustainable energy consumption patterns, urban sprawl, high percentages of people living in slums, high levels of vulnerability to natural disasters, inadequate urban basic services, poor mobility systems and increasing emissions of greenhouse gases.

ASEAN recognizes that even though good practices of managing urban development exist in all regions, we are a long way from turning the ideal of sustainable, inclusive cities into reality. Nowadays, approximately a quarter of urban residents -more than 850 million people- live in slums. Ninety percent of the world's urban expansion is in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

As mentioned by the Secretary General in his message on this year's World Habitat Day, the proportion of humanity living in the

urban environment grows, so too does the need to strengthen the urban focus of our efforts to reduce global poverty and promote sustainable development. It is clear that the urbanization has been a source of development and it can be used as a powerful tool for transforming production capacities and income levels in developing countries.

ASEAN welcomes the formal recognition by the world leaders of the “important role” cities play in sustainable development at the Rio+20 Conference. We are also pleased to note that all of stakeholders strongly reaffirmed to shift the mindset, away from viewing urbanization as a problem, and instead towards seeing it as a tool for development at the sixth session of the World Urban Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

In addressing new challenges and opportunities that have emerged since Habitat II, the ASEAN stresses the importance of preparatory process for the 2016 Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). ASEAN is heartened by the fact that a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements could provide for affordable housing and infrastructure and prioritise slum upgrading and urban regeneration.

Furthermore, ASEAN wishes to put stronger emphasis on the four fundamental prerequisites promoted by UN-Habitat to ensure that the cities and towns of developing countries improve their effectiveness as tools for national development. They are effective political decision-making, good understanding of the use and productivity of common goods, effective governance capacity and adequate technical capacity to plan, develop and manage the city for planned urban expansion.

Mr. Chairman,

At the 20th ASEAN Summit held in Phnom Penh last April, our leaders committed to undertake, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, various programmes for raising

domestic awareness on climate change adaptation and mitigation and inculcating habits towards a low emissions society, including through enhancement of public and private incorporation of climate change in educational curricula. There is no denying that the said commitment could contribute to the prosperity of urbanization.

ASEAN member States have been fully cooperating with the UN-Habitat offices in getting public and private stakeholders to join and participate in decision-making and implementation of programs for affordable housing projects to lessen urban plight.

ASEAN is fully aware of the important role played by the development of ecological and livable cities in enhancing the city's capacity of sustainable development. During the 2012 China-ASEAN Forum on Ecological and Livable Cities" held on 9 October, 2012 in Nanning City, both sides agreed that the development of ecological and livable cities should be people-oriented. In fact, it is an inevitable choice on the path of new urbanization to achieve the harmonious coexistence of human, nature and city, and promote the integration and coordination of urbanization and modern civilization.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, ASEAN shares the view that the synergies between urbanization and development should help us to improve the quality of life of millions of citizens. ASEAN stands ready to cooperate with all partners in creating a new type of city, the city of the 21st century also known as a smart, people-centred city designed to be able to rid itself of the inefficient, unsustainable urban habits of the previous century.

I thank you.