



Keynote Address

by

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- *Excellencies ASEAN and ROK Ministers,*
- *Excellency Dr. **Le Luong Minh**, ASEAN Secretary General,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests!*

Today I am pleased and honored to be invited to deliver keynote remarks at the 2014 ASEAN-ROK Special Ministerial Meeting on Forestry (SMMF), and I wish to express my gratitude to H.E. Mr. **Shin Won Sop** for inviting me to this meeting.

Certainly, forestry sector plays a critical role in the normalization global temperature and environment on the earth. Overall, forestry is an indispensable part of the nature which is dynamically interacting with society and human beings. Thus, the tie between the two, forestry and people, is inseparable and can have deep impact on the psychology, cultures and livelihoods of the people. However, it is regrettable that our social and economic development has increasingly impacted the balance and harmony of the nature, and between human beings and the nature, particularly causing more and more losses of forestry resources and imposing challenges for human beings such as the climate change phenomenon. Thus, countries and regions in the world are required to particularly focus on the environment and natural resources cooperation,

especially forestry resources in order to ensure existence of human beings and social and economic development.

In this spirit, I would like to welcome the achievements stemming from the **Agreement on ASEAN–ROK Forest Cooperation** (AFoCo) and support the establishment of the **Asian Forest Cooperation Organization** (AFoCO). This is the right step forward taken together to respond to the spirit of the ASEAN-ROK Summit aiming at contributing and addressing global challenges related to environmental protection and climate change for the benefits of human beings in the region and the world as well as for the present and future generations.

At the same time, I am of the view that this meeting provides a good opportunity for ASEAN and ROK to continue exchange views and review progresses on the ASEAN-ROK cooperation in forestry sector. I would like to extend my admiration to the government and people of the Republic of Korea for paying close attention on the management and development of the forestry sector which leads to progress, and their efforts on the cooperation in helping ASEAN.

– ***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests!***

Covering 50% of the land area of ten States, the forests of the ASEAN are a key resource in the region’s development and in global efforts to deal with climate change. These forests provide food, fuel, fiber and other products to ASEAN’s 600 million people including 80 million directly relying on non-timber forest products for livelihood. Nonetheless, ASEAN’s forests are threatened by deforestation and degradation— due to conversion to agriculture, logging, mining and unsustainable harvesting. This is directly related our capacity to reduce carbon emissions while the world recognizes that our region has an enormous potential in mitigating the impact of climate change.

Acknowledging the importance of these issues, the ASEAN leaders have introduced various initiatives and implemented many programs aimed to reduce deforestation and forest degradation and to conserve and manage forests with sustainability. For instance, ASEAN has endorsed and implemented programs of the **ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forest** through sustainable, efficient and effective use of land, forest, water and aquatic resources by minimizing the risks and impacts that significantly contribute to coping with

the climate change. Besides that, ASEAN regularly holds **ASEAN Senior Official Meeting on Forestry** and **ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry** to review the progress and chart future directions for forestry related issues.

Based on the above efforts, please allow me to highlight a number of practical measures with the aim to enhance cooperation among member countries and to contribute to addressing issues in the forestry sector as follows:

First. Working together to strengthen sustainable forest management, especially addressing the issues of deforestation and forest degradation, forest research and development, strengthening of forest carbon stock, and the support of forest-related initiatives.

Second. Enhancing efforts to work together to rehabilitate the degraded forest land, to stop ongoing trend of desertification, and to strengthen the governance of better land use management.

Third. Promoting reforestation, including mangroves forests, through the preparation of proper plans.

Fourth. Promoting sustainable management of non-timber forest products, including strengthening the enforcement of law on forestry and the governance of each countries, particularly preventing and combating businesses that do not comply with prevailing laws, rules and regulations.

Fifth. Encouraging sustainable trade on forest products and non-timber forest products and the protection of people's livelihood depending on forest by-products and of minority communities.

Sixth. Promoting the public awareness and the establishment of human resource development institutes for capacity-building on forestry experts and for the cooperation in researches to address current and future issues in forestry sector.

Seventh. Requesting countries in Asia to support the establishment of **Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)**.

I hope that this meeting will further broaden our understanding on our cooperation in order to set future directions on forestry protection in our region as well as provide effective mechanism for cooperation aiming at ensuring regional prosperity and welfare of our peoples, and further

contributing to the efforts in addressing universal challenges concerning environmental protection and climate change.

Finally, I wish Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen, and distinguished guests good health and success in all your endeavors and wish this meeting achieving fruitful results as expected.

Thank you!