

**Statement by
Dr. Manaspas Xuto
Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
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ENGLISH only

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,**

I would like to thank the Government of Spain, the Chairman in Office of the OSCE, for hosting this event, as well as all the relevant bodies of the OSCE for the excellent organization of this Ministerial Council.

Only last week in Singapore, ASEAN celebrated its 40th anniversary since its establishment in Thailand in 1967. The celebration was marked by a key development in the region's history, i.e. the signing of the ASEAN Charter. With the Charter, ASEAN hopes to mature into a regional organization that can be more effective in harnessing regional solidarity, promoting human rights, strengthening regional security and facilitating sustainable development in Southeast Asia.

Thailand is pleased to be a Partner for Cooperation of the OSCE. As the sole member of ASEAN in the OSCE, Thailand is committed to supporting the development of stronger links between the OSCE and ASEAN in regional and international security. Both Europe and Asia must become stakeholders in one another's regions if both sides are to gain maximum benefit from extended cooperation.

To translate words into action, Thailand is ready to work with our OSCE partners in forging appropriate links with ASEAN and the ASEAN Regional Forum or the ARF. Both the OSCE and the ARF regularly hold comprehensive outlooks on security. Both regard confidence-building and preventive diplomacy to be key priorities. And both strive towards enhancing dialogue between all stakeholders in regional peace and stability.

I remember well the process many years ago that saw the transformation of the CSCE to the OSCE and how confidence-building and conflict prevention were the key aims of this region-wide exercise. When ASEAN developed the ARF, regional confidence-building was also key priorities.

Over the years, the regional political and security development within Southeast Asia have come to shape our current approach to building regional trust. The ARF process is now the only region-wide security cooperation forum in the Asia-Pacific, bringing together the ASEAN Member Countries, the EU, Russia, our neighbours in Northeast Asia, and our friends in North America. This is no small achievement for ASEAN.

At the same time, it has often been said that we, Europe and Asia, may have different approaches to security - each having its own tradition of security cooperation. Trying to duplicate one another's work would be futile. But our strength lies in the fact that we can complement each other to tackle global problems. We also believe that the definition of security is broader than what it was decades ago. Indeed, I am sure that the EU has benefited from its participation in the ARF and likewise Asian Partners are happy with cooperation in the OSCE. As we both enhance our capabilities in the shared responsibility for peace and development, it is only natural that potential partnership between OSCE and the ARF be emphasized and brought to fruition.

Europe and Asia thus have much to gain from sharing of information on matters such as arms proliferation, fundamentalism and good governance. In doing so, practical and forward-looking solutions to such global security challenges, or "problems without frontiers", have a better chance of succeeding. But this also means talking frankly about our success AND our failures if we are to learn from each other and really make progress.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand would like to contribute our twin experiences in security and development. A key example is the Mae Fah Luang project, which has been able to put in place a series of alternative livelihood programmes to reduce opium cultivation in northern Thailand. More recently, Thailand was able to bring an example of the Mae Fah Luang project for sustainable alternative livelihood development to Afghanistan - where a Sheep bank programme was introduced to reduce opium cultivation in the northern part of the country. A similar project has also been undertaken in Aceh Province of Sumatra, following the end of the protracted civil strife. The Mae Fah Luang project initiated programmes for irrigation and agriculture as part of the post-conflict reconstruction process.

To obtain a bigger picture of what we can do together, it is essential that we study how we differ. We should know how our region's histories and traditions define our

unique techniques of confidence building, and what factors of our regional diplomacy play a key role in the machinery of our good offices.

For many decades, we in Southeast Asia have been trying to deal with piracy in our regional waters, the trafficking of humans and weapons, and the spread of narcotics in our region. But in today's world we can see how fast narcotics can move from Asia to Europe within hours and how illegal weapons can travel through Europe to Asia within days.

In closing, it is only fitting to say that as Thailand looks back at 40 years of ASEAN, we also look ahead to the future and see how the OSCE and the ARF could one day commemorate many years of collaboration and achievement. I wish to reiterate the sentiments that prevail at this meeting in Madrid and say that our next step must be practical ventures in security cooperation between our two hemispheres. I look forward to this with much anticipation, more so because Thailand will be Chairman of the ARF next year. And many interested member countries of the ARF are represented in this hall.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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