Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by congratulating the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for chairing ASEAN in its 50th anniversary year.

I commend ASEAN’s progress over the past half century towards peaceful co-existence and regional integration.

Multilateralism and regional integration are absolutely vital in our world today representing an opportunity to promote prosperity as well as advance human rights and the rule of law.

Under the ASEAN-UN Comprehensive Partnership, I believe we can intensify our work in a number of areas, including integrating our efforts in peace and security, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian action with close attention to prevention.

With respect to prevention, I repeat my call for all parties to resolve their disputes, including maritime disputes, in a peaceful manner, in conformity with international law, and to avoid unnecessary escalation or provocation.

The recent adoption of the framework of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea is a positive step towards an early conclusion of that Code.

I welcome the efforts of ASEAN Foreign Ministers to de-escalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue within the ASEAN Regional Forum.

I also wish to thank you for the growing contribution from ASEAN Member States to United Nations peace operations, which now exceeds 4,000 personnel.

Terrorism and violent extremism threaten all countries, including in the ASEAN region.

Our new UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the wider UN system stand ready to support ASEAN in addressing these complex threats through regional cooperation.

We have an important opportunity to advance regional approaches in the upcoming ASEAN-UN Regional Dialogue on the Role of Women in Prevention of Violent Extremism in Malaysia.

ASEAN’s leadership is also needed to confront transnational organized crime, including piracy and human trafficking, which is expanding everywhere in the world but also in the ASEAN region.

I encourage further regional cooperation on migration issues. This includes allowing refugees in ASEAN Member States to join the migrant workforce, and attend schools in their host countries.
I welcome ASEAN’s strong leadership on sustainable development, in close partnership with the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Finally, allow me to reiterate my deep concern at the crisis in Rakhine State in Myanmar and its serious implications for stability in ASEAN and the wider region.

I have strongly condemned the attack of August 25 carried out against the Myanmar security forces in northern areas of Rakhine State.

I also continue to call for three immediate actions, namely, the suspension of military and security operations; unfettered access for humanitarian agencies to affected communities; and that those who fled should be able to exercise their right of safe return.

The United Nations welcomes constructive approaches by ASEAN Member States, as well as the provision of humanitarian assistance. I hope that ASEAN can intensify its actions as the time to act is now.

The United Nations stands ready to work with ASEAN to help resolve the root causes of the crisis, including through supporting the Government of Myanmar in the implementation of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State led by Kofi Annan.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I look forward to the ASEAN-UN Summit later this year in the Philippines at which I strongly hope to be present. It would be a great pleasure for me.

I wish you great success for everything you are doing for the benefit of your people as you look to the future.

Thank you.