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**Speech by Olga Algayerová, State Secretary, Ministry
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Dear Mr. Chair, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel honoured today to have the opportunity to address this Assembly. I deeply appreciate the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the European Commission in the preparation of this event. There is no doubt that ASEM cooperation plays an important role in the development policy. This partnership can be a matter of pride for all of us, because it reflects our common willingness to work together building on common values. At a time of global competition, we have decided to keep on binding our respective fates.

This is not necessarily the easy way: of course, we have our differences. But this is the only way to deal with global challenges, such as climate change, social cohesion, aid effectiveness and energy security, identified by the Beijing Declaration and declared by the first ASEM Development Conference in Manila. This interconnection can only be achieved through an open dialogue. In this regard the Second ASEM Development Conference plays a key role. As the representative of one

of the EU member states, I am looking forward to engage into a fruitful dialogue between the EU and Asia in development cooperation.

Sustainable development means the process, which allows satisfying the needs of present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. It is a process in which the use of resources, the direction of investments, technology orientation and institutional changes are all in harmony with mutual needs of the human kind in the future. Sustainable development is our common interest. We have common rights to fulfill our needs and therefore our further actions must be based on future mutual cooperation and systematic action.

Today, the world faces a number of key issues, which are of existential nature, and are reaching far beyond the national states. This requires the creation of synergic resources and capabilities both at the global and regional level. One of these challenges is climate change. Extreme weather affects us all, but it has the greatest impact on the most vulnerable countries. In this respect, the EU is trying to find a legally binding agreement, which would be equally binding on a global scale.

The EU and Asia share great potential for development of low carbon technologies, creation of new generations of products, increasing the safety and operational reliability, extending and modifying the legal systems, creating forecasts and planning environmental and economic systems. It is necessary to start using

alternative energy sources that are available in every country and in unlimited quantities.

It is imperative that economic development be fully aligned with the environmental and social principles. Economic development must be aimed not only at increasing production and consumption, but should be focused on the needs of poor countries as well; this issue should be given the highest priority. Sustainable development cannot be reached without the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. The role of policy makers is to create better conditions for fully fledged partnerships from which mankind can benefit and gain new knowledge, new technologies and strategies for sustainable development.

Asia is one of Europe's most important trading partners, accounting for nearly one-fifth of EU exports and imports. Asia is a source of skilled labour, and increasingly a source of inward investment for Europe. Increasingly, Asia and Europe have common or overlapping interests around the world.

This year is pivotal for development policy. The United Nation's Millennium Development Goal High Level Meeting in New York will represent a major challenge and opportunity. Asia continues rapid progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Asia was less seriously affected than Europe by the global financial crisis, has rebounded more strongly and more quickly. Nevertheless, it still contains the largest concentration in the world of those living in absolute poverty with many

countries, unfortunately, making slower progress on the environment, health and gender equality MDGs.

Thus, future progress will depend very largely on decisions taken by Asian countries themselves. At the same time the external environment will also shape their progress: financial regulations and financial flows, trade rules, investment climate regimes, access to natural resources, possibilities for migration, availability of intellectual property, actions of the private sector, and other issues. In both substance and process, these topics make up the landscape of development partnership within which aid is an important but relatively minor tool.

Regional integration in Europe on the one hand side and in Asia on the other one evolved in different conditions and different times. For this reason, they are in various stages. However, they have a common goal of achieving sustainable development. That is way the European Union, including Slovakia, strongly supports and promotes regional integration processes in Asia but also the European Union's direct cooperation with the regional groups. Let's not forget that the cooperation of regional groups can be one of the most effective responses to the challenges of globalization.

I am very glad to say at this conference that the process of cooperation and partnership between the EU and Asian countries deepens, extends, but is also increasing its quality. At the same time I am pleased that this process is not unilateral, but reciprocal.

And finally, I would stress that even small countries such as Slovakia can offer own experience and knowledge as a contribution to the process of sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention!