



Keynote Address

by

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Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
at the

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"Strengthening ASEAN Centrality, Connectivity with the Global Community"

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*Your Excellency Boediono, Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia,
Your Excellency Dato Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister
of Malaysia,
Your Excellency Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary General of ASEAN,
Your Excellency Bapak Aburizal Bakrie, Chairman of the 8th ASEAN
Leadership Forum,
Dato' Michael Yeoh, Chairman, Organising Committee & Chief Executive
Officer, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI),
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the ASEAN Secretariat, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN) and especially Dato' Dr. Michael Yeoh, ASLI Chief Executive Officer, for inviting me to address this august forum.

I am honored today to share with all distinguished participants some of my thoughts on "**Strengthening ASEAN Centrality, Connectivity with the Global Community**" which is the central theme of Indonesia's Chairmanship of ASEAN in this year.

ASEAN has indeed matured in the last 44 years. ASEAN is now playing an active role, taking its rightful place on the same platform among major global players for political and economic dialogue and cooperation. Especially, over the last few years, with firm determination and efforts

made by all our Governments and people in the region and with the support from the partners concerned, ASEAN has made many major achievements in all sectors including political, economic, social and cultural sector.

However, in such a dynamic and rapidly changing world, I believe that ASEAN is still faced with many internal and external challenges in the making of an ASEAN Community by 2015 and beyond. Indeed, ASEAN Leaders have been very active in responding to these challenges by adopting the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Community Blueprints and Roadmaps which comprises 3 pillars namely the **ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC)**, the **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)**, and the **ASEAN Social Cultural Community (ASCC)**, including the goals of narrowing development gaps within ASEAN.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to highlight the key achievements made in the implementation of the ASEAN Charter and the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community by 2015, and main challenges that ASEAN must address in the pursuit of the building of ASEAN Community and its connectivity with the global community.

The **ASEAN Charter** has truly been brought to life with the smooth operation of the new organizational structure as well as the finalization of related legal documents, thus creating the legal basis and institutional framework for the ASEAN Community and deeper regional integration. Nevertheless, ASEAN should have a comprehensive legal and institutional framework in line with the ASEAN Charter, including the institutionalization of a dispute settlement mechanism, the improved operational efficiency of ASEAN bodies and modalities, strengthened coordination among executing agencies, and enhanced resources mobilization, in order to expedite the implementation of ASEAN initiatives. Thus, ASEAN will be able to transform itself by going through a new phase of community building process to become a truly rules-based organization.

There is no doubt that significant progress has been made in the building of the **ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC)**. Regular dialogue and cooperation at all levels on issues of mutual concern have enhanced mutual understanding and trust among Member States. In this regard, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (SEANFWZ), the Declaration on the Code of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea

(DOC), the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism have become crucial instruments to ensure regional security.

Moreover, the mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation in regional security have been strengthened through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), ASEAN Chiefs of Security Agencies (MACOSA) and ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF). The ARF has now evolved into the region's premier security forum, which plays a positive role to ensure political, economic and strategic balance between great powers in our region. Moreover, the ARF mechanism also ensures that **ASEAN plays a central role** in maintaining peace and security in the region, and therefore will be the cornerstone of the ASEAN Security Community. In other word, the ARF is making progress on three main fronts, namely confidence-building, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.

Overall, all these mechanisms were formed in order to enhance mutual understanding and trust among countries, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace and security in the region. However, we must acknowledge that bilateral disputes among a number of ASEAN member countries, such as border disputes have become the foremost critical challenge for ASEAN in their pursuit towards the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015. Therefore, there is a need for ASEAN to put in place a practical mechanism for an effective dispute settlement in the region, thus ensuring regional peace, security and sustainability, especially among member countries.

The process of building the **ASEAN Economic Community** is in good shape with the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area for trade in goods, services and investment as well as the implementation of the ASEAN single window and trade facilitation. ASEAN is a region marked by high growth and political stability, a growing middle-income population, endowed by enormous natural resources. These endowments result in great potentials for ASEAN's internal growth and its economic attractiveness to external partners. However, the reduction of development gaps among ASEAN member states remains our critical challenge in ensuring competitiveness and attractiveness of the region and in achieving regional integration.

Moreover, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity is the most comprehensive plan underpinning the success of building the ASEAN Economic Community. To achieve this goal, ASEAN needs to engage all ASEAN Partners, including the Plus 1, the Plus 3 and other countries

