

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**PRESS RELEASE – 15th ASEAN LEADERSHIP FORUM**

KUALA LUMPUR, 25 April 2018 – The Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI) together with co-organisers S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Social Innovation Park, and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) will hold the 15th ASEAN Leadership Forum on the 28th of April 2018. The forum, themed “*Future Proof ASEAN: Strengthening Resilience, Promoting Innovation & Moving Forward the Digital Space*”, will be at the Marina Mandarin Hotel in Singapore.

The ASEAN Leadership Forum (ALF) is an annual, high-level forum held around ASEAN’s April summit meeting. Now into its 15th edition, the 2018 ALF will be held in Singapore in conjunction with its term as ASEAN’s Chairman. The ALF will bring together leaders from government, business, academia, think tanks and civil society to discuss future challenges facing ASEAN in the new global era of digital disruption. It will also discuss the 4C’s of ASEAN – community, charter, connectivity and centrality – debating how can ASEAN move forward with the 4C’s to create a sustainable and inclusive ASEAN? What more needs to be done to realise the ASEAN 2025 vision? Where do we go from here?

Against the massive, phenomenal disruptions taking place across the globe, ASEAN has not been a laggard. With the world’s third largest population, 70 percent of whom are under 40 years of age, ASEAN is large and still growing. It is one of the fastest growing Internet regions in the world, with an expected 480 million users by 2020. It has the fastest growing working-age population and is estimated to add 50 million people between 2010 and 2020. Many of these workers are highly mobile, digital savvy, and have different perspectives on what constitutes a fulfilling career.

The forum, which is divided into an all-day conference and evening gala dinner, will feature **Ambassador Ong Keng Yong**, Executive Deputy Chairman at RSIS and former ASEAN Secretary General as the opening speaker at the conference. Speaking at the conference are high-level speakers from government including **H.E. Enggartiasto Lukita**, Indonesian Minister of Trade; **The Rt. Hon. Greg Hand MP**, Minister of State in the Department for International Trade in the UK; **Dr Wang Huiyao**, Councillor to the State Council of China / President of the Centre for China & Globalisation in Beijing; **Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Mohd Munir Abdul Majid**, Chairman of Bank Muamalat Malaysia Berhad and CIMB ASEAN Research Institute (CARI); and **Dr Robert Yap**, Chairman of ABAC and Executive Chairman of YCH Group, Singapore.

Giving the Special Dinner Address at the gala dinner will be the **Hon. Dr Vivian Balakrishnan**, Singapore’s Minister of Foreign Affairs. **H. E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce Cambodia, representing H.E. Samdech Sen, Cambodian Prime Minister**, will be giving a special address. **Tan Sri Dato’ Dr. Michael Yeoh**, Chairman of the ASEAN Leadership Forum and CEO of ASLI will be giving a citation for the Special ASEAN Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award to be awarded to the **Hon. Goh Chok Tong**, Second Prime Minister and Emeritus Senior Minister of Singapore for his exemplary service and long record of accomplishments as Prime Minister, Member of Parliament and former ASEAN Chairman.

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About the Organisers:

The Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (ASLI) is an independent private think tank committed to promote dialogue, understanding and better relations amongst government, business and civil society in the wider Asia-Pacific region through conferences, policy roundtables and strategic forums. With over 20 years of experience,

ASLI provides strategic analysis and advice on critical issues and bring people together to exchange views, develop policy options and key recommendations. ASLI's Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) engages in public policy analysis, policy advocacy and roundtables and is ranked as No. 4 in Asia-Pacific in a Global Study on Think Tanks.

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) was established in January 2007 as an autonomous school within the Nanyang Technological University to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. In general, research at RSIS focuses on issues relating to the security and stability of the Asia Pacific region and their implications for Singapore and other countries in the region. Its network with universities and think tanks all over the world is extensive, including membership of the Council of Councils established by the U.S.-based Council on Foreign Relations.

Social Innovation Park (SIP) is a home-grown, impartial, non-profit organization founded in 2006 to Educate, Empower and Enhance social entrepreneurs and innovators from the Private, Public, and People (3'P') sectors. SIP's vision is to build a more sustainable, inclusive and mindful world, through high-impact, sustainable and cross-sector solutions to social needs. SIP won the meritorious Most Prestigious Brand Award (Singapore) in 2009, making us the youngest ever organization to receive such an award.

The ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) was formed following decision of the ASEAN Leaders at the 7th ASEAN Summit and launched in April 2003, with the mandate to provide private sector feedback and guidance to boost ASEAN's efforts towards economic integration as well as to identify priority areas for considerations by the ASEAN Leaders. In order to fulfil the mandate to provide policy recommendations to the ASEAN Leaders, ASEAN BAC organizes the annual ASEAN Business & Investment Summit (ASEAN-BIS) to coincide with the ASEAN Summits.