

**Welcome Remarks by H.E. Le Luong Minh**  
**Secretary-General of ASEAN**  
**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN**

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*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We are honoured to have His Excellency Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia joining us today. I thank the President for his presence to grace this celebrative ceremony.

I recognize Her Excellency Retno Marsudi Foreign Minister, Their Excellencies Hassan Wirajuda and Marty Natalegawa, Former Foreign Ministers of Indonesia,

His Excellency Dato' Sri Anifah Aman, Foreign Minister of Malaysia,

Their Excellencies Tan Sri Ajit Singh and Ong Keng Yong, Former Secretaries-General of ASEAN

His Excellency Djarot Saiful Hidayat, Governor of Jakarta,

Excellencies, Ambassadors, Representatives of ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners, International and Non-Governmental Organizations,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I thank you all for your presence as we mark the momentous milestone - the golden anniversary of ASEAN.
  
2. When it was established five decades ago, on 8 August 1967 with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration, many doubted that in a region so diverse and embroiled in hostilities and intra-mural tensions raging at the peak of the Cold War, ASEAN would survive.

3. Even in that difficult context, ASEAN determined its ultimate objective was to unite all nations of diverse Southeast Asia under one roof. And, “bonded as one”; “look-in out-ward to the world”; “peace, our goal from the very start”; and “prosperity to last”, it were as if the ASEAN manual had been written 50 years ago. It is this vision of unity in diversity that has made ASEAN ever relevant and perpetual. It is this far-sighted vision that we see in the present its past, that made people dare to dream and care to share. It is this far-sighted vision that has enabled ASEAN to survive and thrive.
  
4. From a fledging association, overcoming the challenges in the course of its evolution through a decades-long process of Community building, ASEAN has persevered and prospered over the past fifty years to become an indispensable player and major contributor to peace, security and prosperity in Southeast Asia and beyond. ASEAN has fundamentally shaped the regional agenda and has thrived against all odds to become one of the most successful regional organizations. ASEAN today is widely recognised as an effective model of regionalism in all three key dimensions: regional peace and security, economic integration and institution building.
  
5. Through the promotion of trust, confidence and peaceful relations among its Member States and with other countries in and beyond the region and through the development and strengthening of legal instruments and mechanisms that uphold the principles of peaceful existence and pacific settlement of disputes, economic partnerships that promote free trade and fair competition, social policies embracing inclusive development, ASEAN has become an anchor of peace, a driver of economic integration and a platform for

comprehensive security, a Community where peace among its members is guaranteed; peace with neighbours can well be maintained; its economies increasingly integrated, a Community where six hundred million people from different national political, social, cultural and religious backgrounds do share and care.

6. As much as what has been achieved over 50 years of its regional integration, challenges remain for ASEAN along the way. The formal establishment of the ASEAN Community at the end of 2015 and the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and its three corresponding Community blueprints were testament to ASEAN's continued commitment to its forward-looking integration agenda. As ASEAN enters a new phase of its journey, it needs the continued support of its Member States, its peoples, Dialogue Partners and other stakeholders. ASEAN needs to stay the course and stand united to weather the current tide of complicated developments in regional and global situations ranging from persisting development gaps, the spread of extremist and terrorist ideologies, protectionism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and tensions resulting from maritime sovereignty disputes, upholding ASEAN centrality and the principle of open regionalism, ensuring its role as an effective player in maintaining regional peace and stability, and an environment conducive to realising its vision of a truly rules-based, resilient, people-centred Community, an ASEAN capable of playing bigger roles in responding as one to regional and global challenges.
7. As we are celebrating this happy birthday of the organization that we all care, this will be the last time I am with you on such

momentous occasions. Let me share with you my conviction that following the way of ASEAN “bonded as one”; “look-in outward to the world”; with “peace, our goal from the very start”; and “prosperity to last” , the ASEAN generation of 50 next years will have more to celebrate.

Thank you!