

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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**ASEAN CONNECTIVITY SYMPOSIUM:  
ENHANCING ASEAN CONNECTIVITY TO SUPPORT ASEAN COMMUNITY 2015  
8 September 2012  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

**Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Sept 8, 2012** – The 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Connectivity Symposium entitled “Realising ASEAN Connectivity for ASEAN Community Building” has been successfully conducted on 7-8 September 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the ASEAN Secretariat and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), the Symposium brought together approximately 200 government officials, researchers and the private sector from ASEAN and Dialogue Partner countries as well as international organisations.

The ASEAN Connectivity Symposium, an annual platform, enables relevant stakeholders to discuss concrete steps and articulate their perspectives on the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) through a Public-Private Sector consultative process.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium highlighted the cultivation of regional partnerships in connectivity for an equitable development and for future shared prosperity within ASEAN. The two day programme commenced with plenary sessions which explored (i) the status of implementation of the Master Plan, (ii) strengthening physical and institutional connectivity, and (iii) building people-to-people connectivity. Subsequently, break-out sessions enabled in-depth assessment of the key actions in the Master Plan and their implementation, recommendations for regional effort for resource mobilisation and private sector involvement, and immediate steps needed to realise the impact of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, particularly to ASEAN peoples and the private sector.

Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan emphasised that “ASEAN Connectivity will benefit not only ASEAN, but also East Asian and global firms operating in the region. For many years, ASEAN and its partners have become interdependent and economically intertwined. This makes connectivity ever more important”.

The role of the private sector was emphasised to take on the challenge of limited funding of regional and national infrastructure, which was previously derived from public sector. It was estimated that ASEAN would require over USD 600 billion worth of investment in infrastructure to make up for historical underinvestment, and to accommodate the surge in demand over the next decade. Key stakeholders discussed methods in which private sectors can effectively participate in various public-private partnership (PPP) arrangements and innovative strategies for ASEAN to mobilise scarce resources such as the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund.

H.E. Mr. Hor Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, acknowledged that “there are challenges in attracting private sector

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investment include the long gestation period and availability of other investments with better returns. But we should enhance our cooperation to provide better identification of needs and optimal use of resources for the region. Key stakeholders identified that services must be prioritized, and ASEAN member states should consistently pursue human resource development in order to reduce the development gap. In addition, services to improve social safety nets during transition periods should be encouraged to maintain stability.

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