

ASEAN Convenes the Sixth Connectivity Symposium

KUALA LUMPUR, 21 October 2015 – As ASEAN integration comes closer, Malaysia as Chairman of ASEAN continues to intensify its efforts to reach out and consult stakeholders on the post-2015 ASEAN Connectivity agenda. The 6th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium with the theme "The Connectivity Agenda for an Integrated ASEAN Community" was held on 16 October 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.

The Symposium gathered perspectives from the drafters of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC), the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee, the ASEAN Secretariat as well as the Asian Development Bank and sub-regional arrangements on the achievements and challenges of implementing the MPAC. The Symposium also gathered the views of the High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on a post-2015 vision, the former chair of the HLTF on ASEAN Economic Integration Working Group, ASEAN Connectivity post-2015 consultancy firm AlphaBeta and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) on considerations in preparing the post-2015 ASEAN Connectivity agenda. Finally, the expectations and contributions to ASEAN Connectivity from the private sector (ASEAN Business Advisory Council and ASEAN advisory PTE), international organisations (APEC Secretariat), and Dialogue Partners (Australia, China, European Union, Japan and ROK) perspectives were discussed.

In his opening remarks, the Honorable Dato' Sri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia stated, "A better-connected ASEAN will contribute towards freer movement of people, of goods and of services. This in turn will better the lives of our ASEAN citizens, raising their living standards in tandem with ASEAN's economic progress."

Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, commits to use its research capability to bring forward the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN Connectivity. "The key message of the Comprehensive Asia Development Plan (CADP) 2.0 is to establish a tight link between infrastructure development and industrialisation. Different stages of industrialisation require diversified infrastructure needs." Prof. Nishimura said.

The forum was initiated and organised by the Malaysian Government, with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretariat and in collaboration with ERIA and attended by almost 200 participants, representing ASEAN and Dialogue Partner countries, relevant sectoral Agencies, international development banks, regional and sub-regional organisations as well as the private sector, academia and the media.