

**Welcome Remarks**  
**By H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi**  
**Secretary-General of ASEAN**  
**at Dr. Surin Pitsuwan's Tribute Forum**  
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**ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta**

Excellencies, Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, distinguished guests, family of Dr. Surin, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning!

Let me welcome you to this forum to pay tribute to the legacy of one of my predecessors – Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the 12<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General of ASEAN. He was not only a pride of Thailand, but also of ASEAN.

I would like to especially welcome the family of Dr. Surin to this gathering – his wife, Alisa, and their two sons, as well as Dr. Surin's sister. We are deeply honoured by your presence here.

***Distinguished Guests***  
***Ladies and Gentlemen***

We are here today to honour Dr. Surin and his contributions to ASEAN. He was a diplomat, scholar, human rights advocate, politician, humanitarian, and in

the case of the ASEAN Secretariat - a leader and a friend.

Indeed, Dr. Surin has left behind an indelible mark on the pages of ASEAN's history. As we will hear later from our distinguished speakers, the visionary leadership of Dr. Surin altered the political landscape of ASEAN, particularly in some of its most difficult moments, like the post-cyclone Nargis relief and recovery episode.

Dr. Surin was once cited, ***“If ASEAN could take care of itself, the world would have one less region to worry about.”*** It was such vision of an “ASEAN caring for ASEAN” that led to the formation of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management or ‘AHA Centre’.

He also made ASEAN accessible to the people by engaging with the civil societies. He was determined to see that everything ASEAN does would benefit the ordinary citizens. He tried bridging the divide where there were conflicts. He made tremendous contributions to peace-building in the region, and he spoke passionately about ASEAN, where and when it matters.

As an educator himself, Dr. Surin was a believer of knowledge, always trusting on the power of critical thinking and development of new ideas as key to tapping ASEAN's full economic potential. In fact, Dr.

Surin was also instrumental in establishing ERIA as a regional think tank as well as in institutionalising the regional integration monitoring office at the ASEAN Secretariat.

Besides raising the level of regional social-cultural cooperation, Dr. Surin was a strong supporter of regional economic integration, always believing in the region's inherent dynamism to contribute to the global economy. His frequent travels had him reminding other states and nations of ASEAN's successful integration model that no other developing countries or regions had done.

As for my personal memory of Dr. Surin, I remember him to be a great problem-solver and a very capable moderator, especially during difficult negotiations, in which he could bring everyone together and balanced every stakeholders' interest.

It is my hope that this forum will inspire us to imbibe Dr. Surin's passion for turning ASEAN into a friendly but yet influential regional and global player in all aspects of our development.

**To quote Winston Churchill, “the only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions.”**

I believe that shield would be the highest form of tribute we can give to honour the memory of Dr. Surin.

Thank you.