

# REPORT

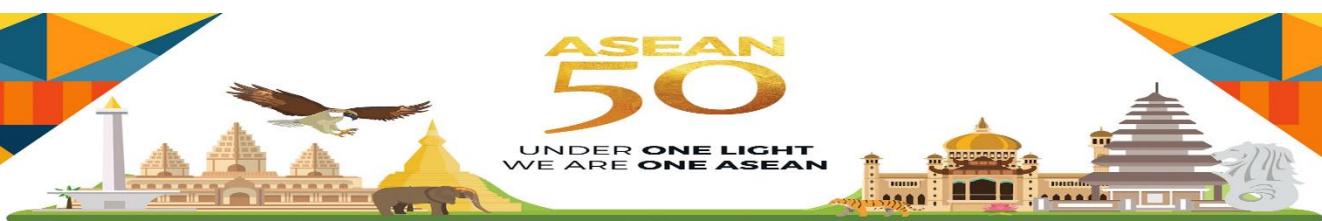
## CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE EMBASSY OF THE PHILIPPINES



## OF THE ASEAN MOSCOW COMMITTEE

19 April – 13 December 2017

MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FEDERATION



## THE PHILIPPINE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE ASEAN MOSCOW COMMITTEE

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The Philippines took over the Chairmanship of the ASEAN Moscow Committee in simple ceremonies at the Malaysian Embassy on 19 April 2017. The outgoing Chair, Malaysian Ambassador Dato' Hayati Binti Ismail, turned over the Chairmanship by handing over the symbolic ASEAN Matryoska to Ambassador Carlos D. Sorreta in the presence of the other ambassadors and heads of posts of ASEAN member countries in Moscow.

The chairmanship was supposed to go to Myanmar, following the tradition of passing on chairmanships in alphabetical order. However, the Myanmar ambassador was

leaving soon with no immediate replacement. The ASEAN ambassadors then asked the Philippines to take over.

Under Philippine Chairmanship, the AMC organized commemorative activities in celebration of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN:

- Lunch with H.E. Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, 15 September 2017;
- Press briefing for Russian media on the accomplishments of ASEAN regional cooperation, 23 August 2017;
- ASEAN Day Reception, 8 August 2017; and
- Launch of the ASEAN-Russia Essay Writing Contest, 8 August 2017.

The AMC also initiated contact between ASEAN young diplomats posted in Moscow and the Council of Young Diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

### LUNCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEY LAVROV

In a historic first for the ASEAN Moscow Committee (AMC), Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov joined the Ambassadors of the ten Southeast Asian countries to the Russian Federation in celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN at a luncheon held at the Philippine Embassy on 15 September 2017. Also invited were other senior officials of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Mme. Lyudmila Vorobiova, Director of the Third Asian Department, and H.E. Alexander Ivanov, Russia's Ambassador to ASEAN.

The luncheon which featured one (1) signature dish from each ASEAN country proceeded in a convivial manner.



*Philippine Ambassador to the Russian Federation Carlos D. Sorreta (6<sup>th</sup> from left) together with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (5<sup>th</sup> from left) and the Ambassadors and Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., of ASEAN member countries at the Philippine Embassy in Moscow on 15 September 2017. (L-R: Mr. Francisco Munis, CDA of Malaysia, Mr. Lai Ngoc Doan, CDA of Vietnam, H.E. Lim Kheng Hua of Singapore, H.E. Kriangsak Kittichaisaree of Thailand, FM Lavrov, Amb. Sorreta, H.E. Ker Vicseth of Cambodia, H.E. Mohamad Wahid Supriyadi of Indonesia, H.E. Dr. Siviengphet Phetvorasack of Laos, H.E. Ko Ko Shein of Myanmar, and Mr. Jefferson Leong Weng Hong, CDA of Brunei Darussalam.) (Photo by C. Narvaez)*

The ASEAN Ambassadors and Foreign Minister Lavrov exchanged views on regional and international issues, including the situation in the Korean Peninsula, Syria and the larger Middle East region, Ukraine, and Russia-US relations. They also discussed developments in ASEAN and ASEAN-Russia Dialogue.

In his remarks Ambassador Sorreta lauded the growing cooperation between ASEAN and Russia and ASEAN’s readiness to further deepen the partnership. Ambassador Siviengphet Phetvorasack of Laos and Ambassador Lim Kheng Hua of Singapore each delivered remarks in their countries’ capacity as Coordinator of the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue and incoming Chair of ASEAN, respectively.



## PRESS BRIEFING ON ASEAN REGIONAL COOPERATION



*Philippine Ambassador to Russia Carlos D. Sorreta (right) holds a press briefing on fifty years of ASEAN regionalism, together with the Ambassador of Indonesia Mohamad Wahid Supriyadi (center), at Rossiya Segodnya headquarters in Moscow on 23 August 2017. Also in the photo is Mr. Pavel Davydov, Chief of the Eastern Club of the Press Center of Rossiya Segodnya. (Photo by L. Camoying)*

H.E. Carlos D. Sorreta and H.E. Mohamad Wahid Supriyadi, the Ambassadors of the Philippines and Indonesia to the Russian Federation respectively, held a press briefing on the accomplishments of ASEAN regional cooperation at the headquarters of Russian news agency Rossiya Segodnya (Russia Today) in Moscow on 23 August 2017.

The event was organized by the Embassy of the Philippines, in its capacity as current Chair of the ASEAN Moscow Committee (AMC), as part of the AMC's yearlong commemorative activities for the 50<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary of ASEAN and in collaboration with Rossiya Segodnya.

The press briefing was attended by journalists from Russian print and broadcast organizations such as Rossiya Segodnya/Sputnik, TASS, Interfax, and Regiony Rossii, as well as foreign correspondents from Iraq's Al Mada and the Philippines' ABS-CBN, TV5, UNTV, and Eagle News. The International Affairs magazine of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and the press office of the Embassy of Syria were also represented. The briefing was moderated by Mr. Pavel Davydov, Chief of the Eastern Club of the Press Center of Rossiya Segodnya.

## ASEAN DAY RECEPTION

The AMC organized a lunch reception on 8 August 2017 at the Philippine Embassy premises to commemorate ASEAN's golden anniversary. Guests included officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Russian government agencies as well as representatives from the diplomatic corps, media, private sector, academe, and think tank organizations.

In his capacity as Chair of the AMC, Philippine Ambassador to the Russian Federation Carlos D. Sorreta lauded ASEAN's accomplishments since its establishment on 8 August 1967, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.



“During those fifty years, working together we have transformed our region. Where once our differences divided us, we now have strength in our diversity. Where once rivalries ruled, today cooperation is the rule,” Ambassador Sorreta stated.

He added that “it is a great honor for the Philippines to chair ASEAN during this milestone year. Under the theme “Partnering for change, engaging the world”, we will work to lay a solid foundation for the next chapter in ASEAN regionalism”.



Hon. Lyudmila G. Vorobyova, Director of the Third Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, was the guest of honor of the event.

In her remarks she underscored that: “This anniversary is an important milestone not only for ASEAN but also for the entire region. For half a century the Association has gone a long way from a non-formal group of 5 countries to an authoritative regional organization that

*The Philippine Embassy Cultural Performing Group dances tinikling (top photo). The geol dance performed by Elisabeth Nur Nilasari and Ekaterina Makanina from the Indonesian Embassy (bottom photo). (Photo by C. Narvaez)*

unites Southeast Asia and has proven itself to be one of the centers of the emerging multipolar world”.

To showcase ASEAN’s cultural diversity and add color to the occasion, traditional dishes from the ten ASEAN member countries and folk dances from the Philippines and Indonesia were featured at the reception.



*A buffet of signature Southeast Asian dishes prepared by the ASEAN Moscow Committee for the guests of the ASEAN Day reception held at the Embassy of the Philippines on 8 August 2017. (Photo by C. Narvaez)*

## LAUNCH OF THE ASEAN-RUSSIA ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION



*Dr. Victor Sumsky, Director of the ASEAN Centre in MGIMO University, announces the launch of the ASEAN-Russia Essay Writing Competition at the reception in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN held on 8 August 2017 at the Philippine Embassy in Moscow.*

The ASEAN-Russia Essay Writing Competition was launched on 8 August 2017 during the ASEAN Day Reception held at the Embassy of the Philippines. The competition is organized by ASEAN Centre in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) University, in collaboration with the AMC.

With the theme “ASEAN@50: Achievements, Challenges, and New Opportunities for Cooperation”, the essay writing contest is open to university students in Russia and the ten ASEAN Member countries. The awarding ceremony is scheduled in December 2017 at the ASEAN Centre in MGIMO University. Winners from the Russian and ASEAN sides will be sponsored by the ASEAN Center to a weeklong familiarization visit to Jakarta and Moscow, respectively, in 2018.

## ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN ASEAN AND RUSSIAN YOUNG DIPLOMATS

On 26 July 2017, young diplomats from ASEAN embassies met with members of the Council of Young Diplomats (CYD) of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), a club of Russian diplomats aged 35 and below with a rank of First Secretary, at the MFA in Moscow.

The meeting was part of the ongoing cooperation between the ASEAN Moscow Committee Working Group and the CYD to find ways of



expanding interaction between junior diplomats of the 10-member group and Russia. H.E. Alexander Ivanov, Russia's Ambassador to ASEAN opened the meeting stating that "personal connections are very important in our profession so it is an excellent idea to start networking with one another at the early stage of your careers".

On 24 November 2017, the Embassy of Singapore hosted an informal reception gathering together ASEAN junior diplomats and CYD members.



### ASEAN CENTRE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING



Ambassador Carlos D. Sorreta, in his capacity as envoy of the Chair of ASEAN, co-chaired the 13<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting of the ASEAN Centre in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), which was held on 31 August 2017. MGIMO Rector Prof. Anatoly Torkunov co-chaired the meeting from the Russian side.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov opened the meeting lauding the ASEAN Centre's accomplishments in the promotion of ASEAN-Russia Dialogue.

The Executive Board deliberated on the planned activities for this year, which includes the publication of academic papers and journals in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN, ASEAN-Russia University Forum in Vladivostok on 4-6 September 2017, ASEAN Essay Writing Competition, and ASEAN-Russia Youth Summit in Manila.

They discussed the establishment of the proposed Network of ASEAN-Russia Think-Tanks (NARTT), in accordance with the decision of the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference with Russia in Manila on 5 August 2017.

The Board likewise tackled budgetary and administrative issues.

Ambassador Sorreta expressed support for the strengthening of the ASEAN Centre noting the latter's potential in influencing the agenda and future direction of ASEAN-Russia dialogue.

“Cooperation between ASEAN and Russia has so much room for growth. We in government need more intellectual input and creative ideas to move the relations forward. This is where the ASEAN Centre and the proposed think-tank network come in. The Philippines has always been supportive of track 2 institutions as an avenue for policy generation,” Ambassador Sorreta stressed.

The Executive Board is composed of six (6) member – three (3) each from ASEAN and Russia – and serves as the supervisory body of the ASEAN Centre. Established in 2009, the latter is tasked to promote public awareness of ASEAN and its relations with Russia, people-to-people contacts, and academic research on various areas aimed at fostering the dialogue partnership.

### TURNOVER OF THE AMC CHAIRMANSHIP

The Embassy of the Philippines hosted two (2) AMC meetings and one (1) working group meeting. On 13 December 2017, it turned over the Chairmanship of the AMC to Embassy of Myanmar.



*Amb. U Ko Ko Shein of Myanmar accepts the ASEAN-Russia matryoshka doll from Philippine Amb. Carlos D. Sorreta during turnover ceremony of the AMC Chairmanship at the Embassy of the Philippines on 13 December 2017.*

**END**