

**Welcoming Remarks**  
**Of H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General of ASEAN**  
**At the General Conference**  
**Of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific**

**8 December 2022, ASEAN Secretariat**

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*His Excellency Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia;*

*Dr. Philips Vermonte and Dr. Jeffrey Reeves, Co-Chairs of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific;*

*Bapak Jusuf Wanandi, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies;*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. A very good morning and *selamat pagi*. I am delighted to welcome you to the ASEAN Secretariat for our maiden collaboration with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies to host the *General Conference of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific* (CSCAP). Today's event is a timely opportunity for us to discuss important security challenges and developments in the region.

2. Certainly, over the past three years, the world has been engulfed by insecurity and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as

a result of our collective efforts and working in concert with our external partners, ASEAN is witnessing a speedy and sustained recovery.

3. Indeed, ASEAN's nominal GDP of USD 3.4 trillion in 2021 has surpassed pre-pandemic levels and our economy is on track to grow by 5.1% this year. These promising trends have been spurred by the *ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework*, the entry into force of the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership*, as well as our strong pivot towards digitalisation and sustainable development.

4. As a result, the region is poised to become a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous ASEAN community. To ensure that the region's growth trajectory remains on the uptrend and lifts the lives of the peoples of ASEAN, ASEAN is working in earnest with China and India to upgrade our respective Free Trade Agreements, as well as commence negotiations with Canada, following the announcement of the substantial conclusion of negotiations with Australia and New Zealand recently.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

5. Earlier this year, ASEAN reached yet another milestone in commemorating the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our establishment. When our founding fathers signed the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967, few would have envisioned that this grouping of five developing countries would grow into a family of ten member states, which today stands proudly amongst the global community as the fifth largest economy in the world and will soon welcome Timor-Leste into our fold.

6. Established in the midst of the Cold War, ASEAN took great pains to insulate itself from major power competition, as demonstrated by the adoption of the *Declaration of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality* in 1971. When tensions gave way in the post-Cold War period, ASEAN recalibrated its strategy to welcome and facilitate the active engagement of the major powers, as well as other external partners, in preserving regional peace, stability and prosperity. Among some of these peace dividends were the establishment of the *ASEAN Regional Forum* in 1994, the *East Asia Summit* in 2005 and the *ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus* in 2010.

7. Indeed, external partners continue to see engagement with ASEAN as productive and mutually beneficial, as manifested by the increasing number of requests to accede to the *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation* (TAC). I am pleased to share that this year, we witnessed the accession of 7 new High Contracting Parties to the Treaty, as well as the conferment of Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status to Brazil and the United Arab Emirates.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

8. Today, ASEAN is at yet another inflection point. Major power rivalry is undermining the fundamental ASEAN tenets of openness and inclusiveness by pressuring us to choose sides. At the same time, the increasing tension and polarisation of major power relations are stoking fears of a new Cold War.

9. History has shown that there are no winners, but only discord in a divided global or regional order. In this respect, ASEAN centrality could contribute to lowering tensions among the major powers. In addition, the *ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific* offers an open and inclusive framework toward amicable and collaborative relations by expanding confidence-building measures and engendering trust in the region.

10. One of the profound lessons from the pandemic is that security threats are manifested in many forms. It is therefore important to view security from a holistic and comprehensive manner. For example, our appreciation that health security is inextricably linked to economic wellbeing, social justice and political stability has led to the establishment of the *ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases*, which is based in Bangkok, with satellite offices in Hanoi and Jakarta which is very much important for all of us to mitigate these emerging diseases.

11. It is also vital for us to understand the interconnectedness between and among the many forms of security, particularly climate change, cybersecurity, maritime security, as well as food and water security, which have become increasingly multidimensional and multifaceted. The nexus between geopolitics and the global supply chain also highlights the complexity of international relations and national security on the one hand and economics and trade on the other. This paradigm shift is gaining traction in ASEAN as we work toward enhancing cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination as well as collaboration to secure a stable, safe and sustainable ASEAN community.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

12. Noting that CSCAP, which includes members of ASEAN-ISIS network, will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, I wish to commend the council for all its contributions to policy considerations as well as your thought leadership on regional security.

13. In this regard, I strongly encourage CSCAP and the wider Track 2 community to assist ASEAN policymakers in gaining a better understanding of the increasingly complex nature of security. I also encourage CSCAP to be more involved with ASEAN, especially in contributing to the ongoing work on the *ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision*, as well as call for stronger collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat to further develop and enhance our monitoring and analytical capacity.

13. On this note, I wish the conference a productive dialogue, as well as season's greetings and a happy new year to all of you. Thank you.

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