



**Remarks by Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn,  
at the Launch of the Australia-Southeast Asia Regional Development  
Partnership Plan (2024-2028)**

20 February 2025, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat

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*Your Excellency H.E. Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, SOM Leader ASEAN-Indonesia,*

*Your Excellency Michelle Chan, Deputy Secretary, South and Southeast Asia and  
Australia's ASEAN, ARF and EAS Senior Official,*

*Excellencies, Permanent Representatives of the ASEAN Member States to ASEAN  
and Ambassadors of Dialogue Partners,*

*Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is my great pleasure to join you today at the launch of the *Australia-Southeast Asia Regional Development Partnership Plan (2024-2028)*, a significant milestone in Australia's development cooperation with our region.
2. As the Secretary-General of ASEAN, I extend our profound gratitude to the Australian Government for its steadfast commitment to our region, so comprehensively articulated in this forward-looking plan. My sincere appreciation also goes to the Mission of Australia to ASEAN for organizing this launch on the sidelines of the 37th ASEAN-Australia Forum here at ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

3. The partnership between ASEAN and Australia spans more than five decades, one of the most longstanding relationships in our region. Since its inception in 1974, our collaboration has expanded remarkably to encompass all three pillars of the ASEAN Community. Australia has emerged as an invaluable partner in supporting ASEAN Community-building and integration efforts, making substantial contributions to fostering peace, stability, and prosperity in the region to benefit the people of both sides.
4. The elevation of our relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021 has further enhanced ASEAN-Australia cooperation, establishing it as one of ASEAN's most dynamic and comprehensive dialogue partnerships. Australia consistently demonstrates its support for ASEAN Centrality through active engagement in all ASEAN-led mechanisms. In today's rapidly evolving

regional and global landscape, Australia's crucial role in advancing ASEAN's objectives has become increasingly clear and significant.

5. Both parties are now diligently implementing the outcomes of last year's Special Summit commemorating the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia relations in Melbourne, ensuring our partnership delivers meaningful, substantive, and mutually beneficial results in the coming years.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

6. The *Australia-Southeast Asia Regional Development Partnership Plan (2024-2028)* is a testament to the robust relationship between ASEAN and Australia and reflects our shared vision for a region characterized by peace, stability, and prosperity. The Development Partnership Plan (DPP) brings to life our collective priorities under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, encompassing the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, addressing climate change and energy transition, empowering women and girls, advancing disability and social inclusion, and strengthening community resilience across the Southeast Asia region.
7. The DPP reflects Australia's wholehearted commitment and comprehensive approach to development support, aimed at fostering economic, social, and environmental resilience of our region. As part of Australia's generous allocation of AUD1.3 billion annually in official development assistance to Southeast Asia, the DPP enjoys substantial resources that will be strategically directed to areas of greatest need, providing tangible outcomes and lasting impact and benefits for the people of Southeast Asia.
8. I must emphasize that Australia's unwavering commitment holds even greater significance amid shifting priorities in international development assistance, including the current Trump administration's recent decision to freeze US foreign aid for the time being. Amid these recalibrations and uncertainties, Australia's steadfast support serves as a stabilizing force in our region's development landscape.
9. This demonstrates not only Australia's reliability as a partner but also its strategic foresight in recognizing that consistent, predictable assistance is crucial for long-term regional peace, stability and prosperity. The timely introduction of this Development Partnership Plan ensures critical initiatives across Southeast Asia continue uninterrupted, helping to maintain development momentum during a period of global flux and reprioritization.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

10. I have every confidence that the DPP will significantly strengthen the enduring partnership between ASEAN and Australia. By prioritizing inclusive and sustainable development, empowering our people, and addressing the

pressing needs and challenges of our time, we are laying the foundation for a brighter, more prosperous future for all of us in the region.

11. I look forward to the implementation of this plan. Together, we will build a dynamic and resilient region that thrives in the face of global disruptions, uncertainties and challenges.

Thank You.