



**Welcome Remarks by  
H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN  
at the  
Policy Speech by H.E. Tô Lâm, General Secretary of the  
Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam**

ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat, 10 March 2025

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***Your Excellency Tô Lâm, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the  
Communist Party of Viet Nam,***

***Madame Ngo Phuong Ly,***

***Excellencies, Permanent Representatives of ASEAN Member States to ASEAN***

***Excellencies, Ambassadors of Dialogue Partners and external partners***

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

Good Morning.

1. It is my great honour to welcome all of you to the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat today to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Viet Nam's membership in ASEAN. Viet Nam's accession to ASEAN in 1995 represented a critical step towards realizing the ASEAN Founding Fathers' vision of a unified Southeast Asia—maritime and mainland, archipelagic and continental—bound by shared aspirations for peace and prosperity, and united by a spirit of solidarity and mutual understanding. Over the past three decades, Viet Nam's journey as an active, proactive, and responsible ASEAN member has been truly remarkable.
2. We are privileged today to welcome His Excellency Tô Lâm, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, who will deliver his Policy Speech shedding light on Viet Nam's path forward as a proud member of ASEAN. Under his leadership, Viet Nam is embarking on a “new era of national development”, characterized by bold institutional reforms and ambitious goals for economic transformation. His insights will provide invaluable perspectives on the path forward for both Vietnam and ASEAN amid an increasingly complex regional and global landscape.

3. Today's occasion is indeed profoundly historic, as it marks the first-ever visit of a General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam to the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat. This visit powerfully signifies Viet Nam's deep commitment to ASEAN and stands as a testament for the country's pivotal role in shaping the region's future and strengthening our collective cooperation.

***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

4. Viet Nam's accession to ASEAN was a transformative catalyst for the grouping's region-wide expansion, opening the pathway for the admission of Lao PDR and Myanmar in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999, thus achieving the ASEAN-10 vision. As a newer member, Viet Nam has been a steadfast champion of ASEAN's efforts to bridge the development gap. This commitment is exemplified by the 2001 Ha Noi Declaration on Narrowing the Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration, which emphasizes our collective responsibility to integrate Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam into the ASEAN economic mainstream.
5. Viet Nam's leadership in ASEAN is further highlighted through its Chairmanship of ASEAN in 1998, 2010, and 2020. Each of these chairmanships was distinguished by notable achievements that have fundamentally shaped ASEAN's trajectory. In 1998, Viet Nam skilfully navigated ASEAN during the challenging period following the Asian Financial Crisis. In 2010, it played a crucial role in strengthening ASEAN connectivity and expanding the East Asia Summit. In 2020, despite the unprecedented global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Viet Nam successfully led ASEAN in advancing regional resilience through coordinating our effective collective response.
6. Viet Nam has also played a proactive and constructive role in enhancing and enriching ASEAN's external relations, aligning its multi-directional foreign policy with ASEAN's outward-looking and inclusive strategic outlook. This synergy is evident in Vietnam's global network of partnerships, including comprehensive strategic partnerships with all major powers and key Southeast Asian neighbours, effectively mirroring ASEAN's robust relationships with its Dialogue Partners.
7. Furthermore, Vietnam has been a staunch advocate for ASEAN's extensive network of free trade agreements, which in turn has solidified the region as a key hub of global supply chains. Since joining ASEAN in 1995 as a low-income nation, Vietnam has truly transformed into one of the bloc's most dynamic and influential members. The country's sustained high economic growth is driving

it towards achieving upper-middle-income status in the very near future.<sup>1</sup> Notably, Viet Nam's share of ASEAN's total GDP has doubled from 6% in 2000 to 12% currently, reflecting its growing economic stature within the region.<sup>2</sup>

8. These remarkable achievements have not only elevated the wellbeing of the Vietnamese people but have also significantly strengthened ASEAN. The organisation's strength is sustained only when each member state thrives and remains committed to the regional community-building. As ASEAN progresses towards adopting the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 this year, Viet Nam's leadership and active role continues to be instrumental in shaping our collective future.

***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

9. His Excellency General Secretary Tô Lâm has held numerous key leadership positions within the Vietnamese government, bringing with him a wealth of insights and leadership experience in national security, economic governance, and foreign policy, and others. Prior to assuming the role of General Secretary, he served as the Minister of Public Security of Viet Nam, where he played a crucial role in strengthening law enforcement, safeguarding national security, and advancing Viet Nam's global partnerships in security and defence.
10. As a seasoned leader with an ambitious vision and a fearless can-do spirit, His Excellency Tô Lâm is steering Viet Nam through a pivotal era of development and transformation. His leadership comes at a critical juncture as the nation seeks to transform its development and economy amidst an increasingly challenging and fragmented global landscape. Under His Excellency's To Lam's guidance, Viet Nam is undergoing comprehensive administrative reforms to enhance the efficiency of the state apparatus and upgrade the economy, while simultaneously expanding its global engagement and deepening cooperation within ASEAN and beyond. His insights today will undoubtedly illuminate the path ahead for Viet Nam and ASEAN as a whole.
11. His Excellency To Lam's qualities are undoubtedly the essence of transformational leadership, which is crucial for both Viet Nam and ASEAN in these challenging and exciting times. With that, it is my distinct honour now to respectfully invite His Excellency Tô Lâm, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, to deliver his Policy Speech.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/vietnam-s-booming-economy-nears-upper-middle-income-status-2361682.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.baohinhphu.vn/viet-nam-bright-star-in-the-asean-economy-expert-111240909155619296.htm?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://en.baohinhphu.vn/viet-nam-bright-star-in-the-asean-economy-expert-111240909155619296.htm?utm_source=chatgpt.com)