



Remarks

H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary General of ASEAN

**Regional Workshop on Climate Change:
ASEAN Centre for Climate Change Activities and Transition Finance Strategies**

Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 21 April 2025

Honourable Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, Minister of Foreign Affairs II, Brunei Darussalam,

Excellency Professor Tetsuya Watanabe, President of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA),

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

1. It is my honour to join you here in Bandar Seri Begawan for this Regional Workshop on Climate Change, focusing on the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change Activities and Transition Finance Strategies. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Government of Brunei Darussalam for their gracious hospitality, and to ERIA and our valued partners for their unwavering commitment to advancing ASEAN's climate agenda.
2. Climate change stands as the defining challenge of our time and for generations to come, particularly for our vulnerable region. We are witnessing, first-hand, the escalating impacts of rising temperatures, increasingly severe weather events, and encroaching sea levels. The Sixth ASEAN State of the Environment Report sounds a clear alarm: climate-related hazards are intensifying, threatening not only livelihoods and eco-systems but also our economic stability. This reality underscores the urgent necessity for scaled-up investment and enhanced regional cooperation to effectively address these multifaceted challenges.

3. Major economies are ramping up their net-zero strategies, while developing nations are increasingly asserting the need for climate justice, equitable financing, and technology transfer. These global developments reinforce the urgency—and the opportunity—for ASEAN member states to align their national and ASEAN region-wide efforts with broader international frameworks, ensuring that our actions are not only locally responsive but globally resonant.
4. ASEAN remains steadfast in confronting this mounting crisis, as reaffirmed by the climate priorities articulated under the current ASEAN Chairmanship and the comprehensive ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the UNFCCC COP29 adopted by the Leaders in 2024. Central to our regional response is the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change (or ACCC), a visionary initiative spearheaded by Brunei Darussalam during its ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021. I am pleased to announce that all ten ASEAN Member States have now signed the Establishment Agreement of the Centre—a watershed moment in our collective climate action journey. This achievement reflects not only Brunei Darussalam's exemplary leadership but also the unified commitment of all Member States to meaningful climate action.
5. The operationalization of the ACCC represents a transformative opportunity for our region. This Centre will serve as a catalyst for collaboration, bringing together governments, private sector innovators, academic institutions, and civil society organizations to forge strategic partnerships that enhance resource mobilization, knowledge exchange, and coordinated implementation of climate-resilient policies. By focusing on critical domains such as research and development, capacity building, and tailored support for Member States, the Centre will amplify our collective impact. Moreover, it will function as the cornerstone of regional coordination, ensuring a coherent and unified response to climate challenges while championing sustainable solutions.
6. The support of ASEAN's partners remains indispensable in realizing our shared climate ambitions. I extend my special recognition to ERIA, whose collaboration with Brunei Darussalam in organizing this workshop exemplifies the spirit of collective responsibility and action. Equally significant is our partnership with the Government of Australia through the Aus4ASEAN Futures Initiative, which provides crucial support for needs assessment and operational framework development for the Centre. This support is instrumental in ensuring the Centre's effectiveness and efficiency, enabling the development of evidence-based strategies and policies aligned with Member States' priorities.
7. I would also like to highlight our strengthening cooperation with Japan, whose support for the Sixth ASEAN State of the Environment Report and the ASEAN Climate Change Report has established a robust foundation for long-term regional climate action anchored in Transparency and Transformative Actions towards 2050.

8. Japan's continued engagement through support for the ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP) will provide a clear roadmap for ASEAN's post-2025 climate cooperation while supporting the Centre's operationalization. These partnerships exemplify how strategic collaboration strengthens ASEAN's institutional capacity and aligns our actions with the vision of a sustainable, climate-resilient future.

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9. The multi-dimensional nature of climate change demands unprecedented coordination and collaboration. I therefore call upon our partners to actively engage with and support the Centre to expedite its full operation. Close coordination with Brunei Darussalam as the host country will be essential for the Centre to effectively serve regional needs. The ACCC has the potential to emerge as the pre-eminent hub for climate knowledge, coordination, and innovation in Southeast Asia—transforming our regional aspirations into concrete, measurable actions.
10. I strongly encourage Member States to deepen collaboration with partners in identifying priority focus areas for the ACCC, ensuring its work remains grounded and responsive to the diverse needs across our region. This must include enhanced engagement with the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society organizations to co-create innovative, inclusive, and high-impact climate solutions.
11. Furthermore, I urge Member States to adopt a more proactive stance in implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which presents significant opportunities in both carbon markets and non-market approaches. By doing so, we can unlock critical pathways for climate financing, technology transfer, and sustainable development. Simultaneously, ASEAN must intensify its engagement in global discussions on Article 8, particularly regarding Loss and Damage mechanisms. As a climate-vulnerable region, securing access to related funding is vital to strengthen our collective resilience and ensure equitable development across all ASEAN Member States.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. To facilitate the timely and comprehensive operationalization of the ACCC, it is essential that all Member States expedite the ratification process of the Establishment Agreement. Ratification will not only confer legal standing upon the Centre but also demonstrate our collective determination to strengthen regional climate governance. Its completion will enable the Centre to fulfill its mandate effectively, including the coordination of climate actions and the delivery of technical support throughout the region.
13. In parallel, I strongly encourage Brunei Darussalam, as the host country, to initiate necessary consultations with Member States regarding the preparation and conclusion of the Host Country Agreement. This agreement will constitute the

foundational legal and institutional framework supporting the Centre's full establishment and operational functionality.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

14. I commend Brunei Darussalam for its exemplary leadership in preparing for the operationalization of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change, particularly regarding infrastructure development, staffing considerations, and resource mobilization. These proactive initiatives are essential to ensuring the Centre's long-term sustainability and impact.
15. As we prepare for the UNFCCC COP30 and advance towards the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, we must leverage our collective strengths and accelerate our efforts to address climate change. The ASEAN Centre for Climate Change in Brunei Darussalam will stand at the forefront of this crucial endeavour.
16. In closing, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of Brunei Darussalam, especially Excellency the Honourable Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, ASEAN Member States, ERIA, and all our partners. Your dedication to advancing ASEAN's climate action agenda is both timely and essential. The ASEAN Secretariat remains fully committed to supporting the operationalization of the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change and facilitating coordination, coherence, and collaboration across regional climate initiatives.
17. Let us reaffirm our shared responsibility to drive transformative climate action—decisively and collectively. I am confident that your deliberations today will chart a pragmatic yet ambitious course for the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change and for a sustainable, resilient future across our region.
18. Thank you, and I wish you a productive and successful workshop.
