



Remarks

**by H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN,
at the Opening Ceremony of the ASEAN-New Zealand Photo Exhibition**

ASEAN Headquarters / ASEAN Secretariat, 8 May 2025

***Your Excellency Ton Thi Ngoc Huong, Permanent Representative of
Viet Nam to ASEAN***

***Your Excellency Joanna Anderson, Ambassador of New Zealand to
ASEAN,***

Excellencies, Permanent Representatives of ASEAN Member States

***Your Excellency Phillip Taula, Ambassador of New Zealand to the
Republic of Indonesia,***

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kia Ora

Good Afternoon,

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat today. I am deeply honoured to participate in the opening ceremony of the "ASEAN-New Zealand Photo Exhibition," which commemorates the 50th Anniversary of our enduring partnership.
2. I extend my sincere gratitude to Ambassador Joanna Anderson and the New Zealand Mission to ASEAN for orchestrating this exceptional exhibition. The photographic panels displayed here at our headquarters beautifully capture the significant achievements, milestones and memories of our partnership since establishing formal dialogue relations in 1975.

3. This thoughtfully and carefully curated exhibition, coinciding with the ASEAN-New Zealand Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting later today, represents a meaningful celebration of our golden anniversary. It offers an opportunity for the people of ASEAN to gain deeper insights into our enduring cooperation and the robust partnership we have nurtured over five decades. Through these compelling images, we witness vivid snapshots of the comprehensive cooperation that forms the foundation of ASEAN-New Zealand relations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. New Zealand has proven itself a trusted and valued partner in advancing ASEAN community-building and upholding ASEAN Centrality. This enduring partnership has manifested through meaningful development cooperation and technical assistance, innovative capacity-building programs, and active participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms that simultaneously empower our communities and foster regional integration.
5. Our collaboration since 1975 has yielded significant achievements across all three ASEAN Community pillars. In the political-security sphere, ASEAN and New Zealand have worked collaboratively to address evolving non-traditional security challenges. Our joint initiatives have made substantial contributions to counter-terrorism efforts, combating illicit drug trafficking, preventing human trafficking, and enhancing regional cybersecurity through comprehensive capacity-building programs and information sharing.
6. In trade and investment, New Zealand has served as a crucial partner in advancing our shared vision of inclusive and sustainable growth. The ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA), one of ASEAN's most comprehensive free trade agreements, has significantly deepened our economic integration, created vibrant opportunities for businesses, facilitated seamless market access, and fostered innovation through technology transfer and collaborative research initiatives across our respective economies. We look forward to achieving greater prosperity through the AANZFTA Upgrade, which went into effect on 21 April this year.
7. Our partnership in education has been transformative, creating life-changing opportunities for countless young people. In addition, New

Zealand has generously provided short-term training scholarships for ASEAN senior and mid-level public sector officials, focusing on public sector leadership, good governance, public health management, food and agribusiness, and international trade.

8. The ASEAN-New Zealand partnership particularly distinguishes itself in environmental protection and climate action. New Zealand's pioneering national policies, including its ambitious zero-carbon legislation and innovative approaches to conservation, provide an inspiring blueprint that enriches our regional cooperation. ASEAN deeply values New Zealand's technical expertise and financial contributions, which have substantially strengthened the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity's conservation efforts. We equally appreciate New Zealand's invaluable contribution to the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change, supporting our collective climate initiatives and the Centre's mission to generate policy recommendations addressing the climate challenges confronting our region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. In today's increasingly complex geo-political landscape and volatile economic environment, our partnership with New Zealand takes on even greater significance. It stands as a model of regional stability, rules-based cooperation, and economic resilience—especially amid intensifying great power competition and global market uncertainties.
10. Against this backdrop, the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations presents a timely and momentous opportunity to further elevate our partnership. We look forward to the Commemorative Summit in Malaysia later this year and the adoption of a forward-looking joint vision statement that will define the next chapter of our cooperation and partnership. These milestones not only mark our Golden Jubilee but also inject renewed momentum into our shared commitment to deeper, more dynamic, and mutually beneficial engagement in the years ahead.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. As I conclude, I wish to once again express my heartfelt congratulations and profound appreciation to the New Zealand Mission to ASEAN, especially the Ambassador of New Zealand to ASEAN, for organizing this wonderful exhibition, as well as to the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to ASEAN, as the country coordinator for ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations. May it

continue to inspire and nurture the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between ASEAN and New Zealand. I wish the exhibition every success.

Thank you.
