



Welcoming Remarks By
Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Kao Kim Hourn
10th ASEAN Media Forum (AMF)
Manilla, the Philippines, 29 July 2026

His Excellency Leo M. Herrera-Lim, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, ASEAN SOM Leader for the Philippines, and Representative of the Chair for the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) 2026,

His Excellency Dr Andreas Michael Pfaffernoschke, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of the Philippines,

Mr. Michael Weiss, Project Director of GIZ,

Esteemed Panelists,

Distinguished Media Leaders, and Friends

1. It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 10th ASEAN Media Forum (AMF). It is good to see so many senior editors, media executives and industry leaders gathered once again for this flagship event. Your continued participation reflects a shared commitment to strengthening dialogue between ASEAN policymakers and the media community.
2. I am confident that today's discussions will offer fresh and renewed perspectives as well as practical ideas on how we can better communicate the ASEAN story and convey the ASEAN narrative to our people, to the region, and to the world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Since its inaugural edition in 2017, the AMF has brought together media leaders and editors-in-chief from across the ASEAN Member States with ASEAN policymakers, government officials, academics, opinion leaders and representatives from the business community. It provides an opportunity to examine ASEAN's priorities, achievements and challenges alongside the wider regional and global developments that continue to influence and impact our Community. It also invites us to reflect on how journalism, mass media, and public communication can deepen understanding of ASEAN and its work among our peoples and beyond.
4. The media landscape today bears little resemblance to that of a decade ago. News and information now compete with an endless stream of content delivered across digital platforms and social media, where information travels instantly but is not always accurate, reliable or trustworthy. While these platforms have broadened access to news and information and enabled more voices to be heard, they have also made it easier for misinformation, disinformation, miscommunication, and manipulated content to spread across borders.
5. At the same time, generative AI is reshaping how news and information are being gathered, produced and distributed. It presents new opportunities - from improving newsroom efficiency to expanding multilingual reporting in real time - but also raises difficult questions about editorial accountability, authenticity, copyright and the growing challenge posed by synthetic media and deepfakes, among others. These developments place an even greater premium on professional journalism grounded in verification, context and ethical standards. Public trust, once lost, is difficult to rebuild, making credibility one of the media's most valuable, but also vulnerable, assets. These are not challenges for the media alone; they also shape how institutions engage with citizens, convey and explain the value of regional cooperation.

6. As ASEAN works towards the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, these shifts in the information environment have important implications for how we connect and communicate with our peoples. Fostering a stronger sense of regional identity and shared purpose will require sustained and meaningful engagement. The media has a unique contribution and unique role to make in that effort. Beyond reporting developments, you can help explain complex issues, connect regional policies with the everyday lives of our citizens, and make ASEAN's work more accessible. This is why the way ASEAN is reported, explained and understood matters just as much as the work itself. The ASEAN Secretariat therefore sees the media as an indispensable partner in strengthening public engagement with regional integration.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. The international environment continues to be shaped by geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty and technological disruption. These developments influence and shape public discourse and often generate competing narratives that can often obscure facts and deepen divisions. In such an environment, the work of professional journalism extends way beyond reporting events. It is about verifying information, scrutinising competing claims, providing context and enabling citizens to make informed judgments and decisions.
6. For ASEAN, this responsibility carries particular significance. Regional cooperation often unfolds through long-term perspectives, long-term policies, and collective decisions whose benefits are not always immediately visible or tangible. The way these issues are reported and explained will influence how citizens perceive ASEAN's relevance and strengthen confidence in our shared efforts to build a peaceful, stable and prosperous region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. It is in this spirit that I encourage all participants to engage actively and even proactively in today's discussions. This Forum brings together a wealth of

experience from across the region, and I hope it will provide an opportunity for an open exchange of views on the opportunities and challenges facing and confronting the media today. Your perspectives and professional experience will help ASEAN engage more effectively with its citizens.

8. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany, through GIZ, for its consistent support to the ASEAN Secretariat in organising the ASEAN Media Forum and for its continued partnership in strengthening ASEAN's communication and public outreach efforts, and ultimately to advance ASEAN public diplomacy
9. On that note, I wish the 10th ASEAN Media Forum every success. I trust that today's discussions will generate useful and practical ideas, strengthen collaboration between ASEAN and the region's media community, and contribute to a better-informed, better-connected and more resilient ASEAN.

Thank you.