



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

**Keynote Address on
“ASEAN’s Vision for Deepening ASEAN-Brazil Cooperation” at the
Roundtable Discussion on ASEAN-Brazil Cooperation and Going Beyond**

20 August 2026, Embassy of Indonesia, Brasília, Brazil

Your Excellency Andhika Chrisnayudhanto, Ambassador of Indonesia to Brazil,

Your Excellency Justice Antonio Herman Benjamin, President of the Superior Court of Justice of Brazil,

Your Excellency Justice Fatima Nancy Andrighi, Justice of the National High Court of Brazil,

Your Excellency Susan Kleebank, Secretary for Asia and the Pacific at the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil,

Mr. Marcel Daltro, Vice-President of the Asia-Pacific Institute,

Professor Dr. Antonio Jorge Ramalho da Rocha, Director of Institute of International Relations at the University of Brasília,

Excellencies, Ambassadors of the ASEAN Member States to Brazil, Ambassadors of ASEAN Dialogue Partners,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

A very good afternoon. It is a great pleasure to join you today at this Roundtable Discussion on ASEAN-Brazil Cooperation. I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Brasília, the ASEAN Committee in Brasília, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, and all partners involved in organising this timely and important discussion. Today, as we reflect on ASEAN-Brazil relations and explore future opportunities for cooperation, I am reminded of a simple but important lesson from ASEAN's own journey.

For nearly six decades, ASEAN has demonstrated that cooperation among diverse nations is indeed, possible. ASEAN's success has never been about eliminating our differences. Rather, it has been about managing them. It has been about building trust, fostering dialogue, and creating habits of cooperation among countries with different histories, cultures, political systems, and even different levels of development. This lesson offers important insights not only for Southeast Asia, but also for partnerships across regions.

Although ASEAN and Brazil are geographically distant, we share many common aspirations. We believe in dialogue, multilateralism, inclusivity, and international cooperation. We also believe that sustainable peace and prosperity are best achieved through partnership rather than rivalry and competition. It is precisely these shared values that have allowed ASEAN-Brazil relations to flourish.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

ASEAN attaches great importance to its relations with Brazil. Over the years, Brazil has emerged as one of ASEAN's most important partners in Latin America. The trajectory of our relations has been remarkable. Brazil was the first country from Latin America to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the first from the region to become an ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partner, and the first Sectoral Dialogue Partner to establish a dedicated Mission to ASEAN. These milestones reflect Brazil's strong commitment to engaging ASEAN and its recognition of ASEAN's role in promoting regional peace, stability, and cooperation.

This momentum continued with the historic visit of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to the ASEAN Headquarters/ ASEAN Secretariat in October 2025, as well as his participation as Guest of the Chair at the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Kuala Lumpur last year, the first by a Brazilian Head of State. These developments have elevated the profile of ASEAN-Brazil relations and opened new avenues for cooperation.

Today, our cooperation continues to advance steadily through the ASEAN-Brazil Practical Cooperation Areas 2024-2028. From bioenergy and food security to education, public health, gender equality, and people-to-people exchanges, ASEAN and Brazil are already working together to deliver practical outcomes that benefit our peoples. Yet despite this progress, I believe we have only begun to realise the full potential of our partnership.

ASEAN and Brazil are natural partners. Together, ASEAN represents a region of nearly 700 million people and one of the world's most dynamic economic areas. Brazil, as Latin America's largest economy and a global leader in agriculture, renewable energy, biodiversity, and innovation, brings complementary strengths and capabilities.

More importantly, ASEAN and Brazil can serve as bridges between regions. ASEAN can be Brazil's gateway to Asia and the Indo-Pacific, while Brazil can be ASEAN's bridge to Latin America. Strengthening our partnership therefore means strengthening connections across two dynamic regions of the world. Just as ASEAN drives integration in Southeast Asia, we recognize Brazil's pivotal leadership within MERCOSUR. Strengthening our bilateral partnership is a vital stepping stone toward deepening broader ASEAN-MERCOSUR inter-regional ties and cooperation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight several areas where ASEAN sees significant opportunities for future collaboration.

First, strengthening economic cooperation. Trade and investment remain important pillars of our relationship. Brazil is ASEAN's 13th largest trading partner, while ASEAN has become Brazil's fifth largest trading partner. Yet significant untapped potential remains. We should continue to encourage greater business engagement, promote investment flows, and explore opportunities in digital trade, creative economy, innovation, and emerging technologies. During my visit here, I have already extended an invitation to the Chamber of Commerce of Brazil to participate in the upcoming ASEAN Business and Investment summit which will take place in Manila, the Philippines, in November this year.

Second, advancing food security and sustainable agriculture. Recent global disruptions have reminded us that food security cannot be taken for granted. Brazil's globally recognised expertise in agriculture and agribusiness offers valuable opportunities for cooperation with ASEAN. For instance, as the world's leading exporter of halal meat, Brazil is uniquely positioned to partner with ASEAN, which is home to a massive and growing halal consumer market. By sharing technologies, best practices, and innovative approaches across our agricultural supply chains, we can strengthen resilient and sustainable food systems while supporting broader development goals.

Third, strengthening cooperation in renewable energy and climate action. ASEAN and Brazil are home to globally significant environmental resources. As the impacts of climate change become increasingly visible, closer cooperation on bioenergy, renewable energy, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and forest protection will become even more important. We particularly recognise Brazil as a global pioneer in sugarcane ethanol and biofuels; sharing this technological expertise with ASEAN can significantly accelerate our region's own green energy transition. Building on the momentum of Brazil's successful hosting of COP30, we should explore further synergies between ASEAN's sustainability initiatives and Brazil's efforts to advance global climate action.

Fourth, investing in people-to-people connectivity. Strong partnerships ultimately depend on strong human connections. Governments may create frameworks and set up policies, but it is our people who give meaning and substance to international relations. Universities, think tanks, researchers, students, businesses, cultural organisations, and civil society all have important roles to play in strengthening ties between ASEAN and Brazil. Greater academic exchanges, research collaboration, tourism, cultural cooperation, and youth engagement will help create lasting bonds between our two regions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet at a time of growing geopolitical uncertainty, economic volatility, and complex global challenges. In such circumstances, the principles that ASEAN and Brazil share become even more important. Both ASEAN and Brazil remain firmly committed to multilateralism, dialogue, international law, and a rules-based international order. As important voices of the Global South, we can work together to strengthen international cooperation, promote inclusive development, and contribute to addressing common global challenges.

ASEAN also appreciates Brazil's support for ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms. ASEAN Centrality is an assertion of agency and responsibility. It reflects ASEAN's determination to keep the regional architecture open, inclusive, and forward-looking, and to create the conditions for countries with different interests and perspectives to engage constructively.

We value Brazil's commitment to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), which remains an important foundation for inter-State relations, guided by respect for sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, dialogue, and cooperation. We also welcome Brazil's support for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and look forward to advancing practical cooperation under its four priority areas, in particular maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and economic and other areas of cooperation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Friends,

This year marks the beginning of ASEAN's implementation of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, our long-term vision for a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centred ASEAN Community. Realising this vision will require strong and trusted partners. Brazil is one such partner.

As we approach the fifth anniversary of the ASEAN-Brazil Sectoral Dialogue Partnership next year, we have an opportunity not only to take stock of our achievements, but also to elevate our cooperation to new heights particularly as we are working on a possible new Dialogue Partnership.

The future of ASEAN-Brazil relations should not be defined solely by what governments can achieve together. It should also be shaped by the connections we build among our businesses, universities, researchers, young people, and communities. If we succeed in doing so, ASEAN-Brazil cooperation will become more resilient, more innovative, and more future-oriented.

ASEAN's story is ultimately a story of building trust, fostering dialogue, and transforming diversity into strength. I believe ASEAN and Brazil have an opportunity to do the same across regions.

The strong convergence of views between ASEAN and Brazil, combined with the immense opportunities before us, gives us every reason to be optimistic about the future. Let us continue building a partnership that is practical, ambitious, inclusive, and forward-looking for the benefit of our peoples and regions.

I am confident that the best days of ASEAN-Brazil relations still lie ahead of us.

Thank you. *Obrigado.*
