

REMARKS
by H.E. Mr. PRAK Sokhonn, Senior Minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
at the ASEAN Flag Hoisting Ceremony
to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN

11 August 2017



**Excellencies,
Ambassadors of ASEAN Member States,
Heads of Diplomatic Missions,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

A very good morning.

1. We gather and stand today in front of the glorious flag of ASEAN as our Association turns 50 this year, enjoying peace, stability and prosperity. The celebration of this jubilee truly marks another important milestone for ASEAN, as it advances boldly and gradually to achieve its Community Vision 2025 and beyond.

2. 50 years ago, ASEAN was non-existent with each state struggling on their own to find peace inside and outside, to build a new nation after independence and to struggle in between superpowers' rivalry. In such a time, who would have imagined that the creation of this regional block would be a success and that the region would have transformed so much in terms of economic development and the role it can play for the region's peace and stability.

3. Throughout the 50 years of history, ASEAN has initiated and carefully nurtured many crucial regional architectures that have kept the region stable and prosperous, namely the ASEAN Free Trade Area, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Plus Three, East Asia Summit, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus).

4. Now, ASEAN has 10 dialogue partners, 35 High Contracting Parties to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and 87 accredited ambassadors to this regional bloc. Interest from countries outside the region and other regional organizations in Asia, Africa and Latin America to forge cooperation with ASEAN continues to grow, a clear testimony of their trust in our remarkable grouping and envy of our success.

5. If we think of ASEAN as a single country, it is a global economic and trade powerhouse, ranking sixth worldwide in terms of its combined GDP. In 2015, ASEAN's total trade ranked fourth after China, USA and Germany. In the same year, ASEAN attracted US\$121 billion or 7% of total global foreign direct investment inflows. With a population of 625 million, an increasingly integrated market with well enhanced connectivity, ASEAN is well positioned in terms of competitiveness and attractiveness both as a market and regional supply chain.

6. The Establishment of the ASEAN Community at the end of 2015 and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 together with the three Community Blueprints, IAI Work Plan III and Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 will guide ASEAN to further deepen integration and strengthen our common resolve in advancing Community process.

7. Weathering storms and challenges and overcoming various junctures of history, ASEAN has showed the world that our model of integration based on consensus is possible as we are embracing unity in diversity, defying differences in background, culture and stages of development.

8. Our unity in diversity has been reaffirmed through the successful conclusion of the 50th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and related meetings earlier this week under the chairmanship of the Philippines. We have been able to jointly reflect positive developments and issues of concern facing the region.

9. In critical times, ASEAN has always strictly adhered to the ASEAN Way of consensus-based decision making, seeking dialogue, consultation and engagement. Our perseverance and resilience as a regional bloc has been bound by our joint commitments and collective responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity based on the principles of respecting independence, sovereignty, not interfering in other countries' internal affairs and equal treatment without impositions.

10. Despite enormous pressure to change these bedrock approaches, our accumulated success is self-evident that regionalism based on our own collective choice and conditions can work and it works in a positive way that can be accepted by all of us. With 50 years of trial and error, it has hardened our conviction that the ASEAN Way will continue to be the modus operandi and the compass for ASEAN as we navigate through uncertainties in the next 50 years.

11. We continue to aspire to be a politically cohesive, economically integrated, and socially responsible Community. We want a region that is secure, where our peoples can live without fear, a region that is stable, where democratic institutions work, where relations between nations are based on the rule of law and mutual respect.

12. Cambodia, the latest member of ASEAN, shares the pride to be part of the community. In bidding for ASEAN membership, Cambodia was attracted by the joint commitment and collective responsibility for peace, stability, prosperity, based on the principles of respecting independence, sovereignty, non-interference and consensus in decision making.

13. Cambodia's peace and economic development is interrelated with that of the region. Cambodia's internal peace can only be strengthened by the region's peace. Economically, the region's dynamism has also provided ample opportunity for Cambodia's growth and our drive to move up the global value chain and to define our role within the region.

14. Cambodia will continue to join hands with all ASEAN member states in the common endeavor to strengthen the community that is highly integrated, resilient, inclusive, people-oriented and people-centered.

15. Challenges are still there for us in ensuring the quality of integration and to maintain our centrality in driving regional architectures amid evolving global political and economic landscapes. However, I am strongly confident that with our joint efforts and support from our friends and partners, our future journey together will be that of peace and prosperity commonly shared by all.

16. Let us continue this journey together to shape ASEAN in the next 50 years, for our future generations under one common identity and community that is peaceful and prospered.

17. In conclusion, may I thank you all for participating in this celebration and I look forward to meeting you again at the Gala Dinner later today.

Thank you!
