

Welcoming Remarks and Introduction of the Book “ASEAN FutureForward”

Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa

Chairman and Chief Executive, ISIS Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur, 28 August 2017

Bismillahirrahmanirahim

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh dan Salam Sejahtera

Mengadap

Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Sultan Perak Darul Ridzuan, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah, Royal Fellow Institut Kajian Strategik dan Antarabangsa (ISIS) Malaysia.

Ampun Tuanku Beribu Ampun Sembah Patik Mohon Diampun.

Patik bagi pihak ISIS Malaysia dengan penuh hormat dan takzimnya merafak sembah menjunjung setinggi-tinggi kasih di atas limpah perkenan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku sudi mencemar Duli berangkat ke majlis pada hari ini. Sesungguhnya keberangkatan Duli Tuanku amat besar ertinya kepada patik-patik sekalian dan akan menambahkan lagi seri majlis ini.

Ampun Tuanku,

Patik mohon limpah perkenan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku untuk patik turut mengalu-alukan kehadiran tetamu yang lain serta meneruskan sembah ucapan dalam Ingggris.

Yang Amat Mulia Tengku Puteri Seri Kemala Pahang, Tengku Aishah Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah, Executive Director, TAS Industries Sdn Bhd

YBhg Admiral Tan Sri Ahmad Kamarulzaman Haji Ahmad Badaruddin Chief of Navy

Board Members of ISIS Malaysia

Excellencies

Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato’-Dato’

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I bid a warm welcome to everyone to this event today. This is an important event not only on the calendar of ISIS Malaysia, but also on the calendar of ASEAN.

At the outset, I would like to express our humble and sincere thanks to HRH Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah for bestowing upon us the honour of His Royal Highness’ presence at this occasion to launch the book entitled “ASEAN FutureForward” published by ISIS Malaysia.

We are also most grateful to His Royal Highness for agreeing to deliver the royal address. This is the first time that His Royal Highness will be doing so as Royal Fellow of ISIS Malaysia.

Patik sekalian menjunjung kasih Tuanku.

ASEAN is fifty years and twenty days old today. The celebrations for ASEAN's Golden Jubilee on 8th August reportedly were somewhat ordinary; no grand parades or rallies, no really spectacular fireworks, and no major pronouncements. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers gathered in Manila and observed the commemoration of ASEAN's fiftieth anniversary while attending the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) with the Dialogue Partners.

This, to me, in a way reflects ASEAN's maturity: there is recognition that the Association has reached fifty, but that is just another milestone in ASEAN's regional integration effort. There have been many milestones before this. And there are still many more to come in the future.

In November 2015, at the summit in Kuala Lumpur, ASEAN declared itself to be a community; a community that is people-oriented and people-centred. The idea was to get ASEAN closer to the people. Yet in the recent fiftieth anniversary celebrations, the absence of the people has been quite noticeable.

This event today is part of a process that aims to reach out to the people, at least certain segments of the population in ASEAN and beyond.

Activities to commemorate ASEAN's Golden Jubilee had indeed begun earlier than August 2017. Think tanks throughout ASEAN and outside ASEAN, for example, have organised numerous conferences, seminars and symposia focusing, inter alia, on ASEAN's ways, ASEAN unity and centrality, and ASEAN's failures and achievements over the last five decades while also attempting to forecast the future of ASEAN over the coming fifty years. Similarly, several ASEAN@50 business level conferences have been held.

On 22 May 2017, ISIS Malaysia organised a one-day symposium entitled "ASEAN 50/50" just prior to the 31st Asia-Pacific Roundtable. This symposium succeeded in bringing together experts on ASEAN, including two former ASEAN Secretaries-General, Surin Pitsuwan and Ong Keng Yong, and young leaders from around ASEAN, who shared their vision of and hopes for ASEAN in the future. One of our objectives was to create understanding and find common ground between the older and younger generations in ASEAN. In that, I believe, we succeeded.

Even earlier, with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, and the ASEAN Secretariat, we successfully held a two-day conference, with the theme "ASEAN's Next Fifty Years: ASEAN's Future in a Rapidly Changing World", in Kuala Lumpur on 2-3 February 2016.

We brought together some 50 senior, influential and up-and-coming thought leaders, including some from among the millennials, to peer into ASEAN's future over the next fifty years. They came not only from the ASEAN Member States, but also from among the Dialogue Partner countries. The discussion was intense and very enriching.

ISIS Malaysia has always been committed to raising the bar of the conversations on ASEAN. We felt here was the opportunity to do so once again. We decided that the ideas and thoughts generated at the conference should be captured in a book for the benefit of the wider public.

The publication of a book to coincide with ASEAN's fiftieth anniversary became our objective. We proceeded to ask some of the brightest and most notable minds on ASEAN to each compose a short essay emphasising issues that could alter the region's characteristics using horizon scanning and risk assessment. They gladly obliged, and for that we are most grateful.

This event today marks the culmination of that effort. With the blessing of the Almighty, we can proudly breathe a sigh of relief and submit our thanks to Him. The book is done and ready to be launched.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Prof Mari Elka Pangestu for accepting my invitation to co-edit the book. She is certainly one of the leading specialists on macroeconomics and international trade in the region. She has had a wide experience in academia and government. She was the Indonesian Minister of Trade (2004-2011) and later Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy (2011-2014). At ISIS Malaysia, we have long known Prof Pangestu given her association with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, our close partner bilaterally and under the ASEAN-ISIS network.

I had invited Prof Pangestu to be here today to introduce the book. However, she has sent her regrets at not being able to come owing to a prior engagement.

Allow me then to do the introduction.

We have chosen to give this book the title, "ASEAN FutureForward: Anticipating the Next Fifty Years". The book consists of a collection of essays contributed by 32 authors. They come from a wide range of backgrounds: current and former officials and practitioners who have accumulated extensive and intimate knowledge of the complexity of ASEAN, business leaders who have the knowledge and expertise to comment on ASEAN's economic integration and business environment, academic figures who have spent a large part of their career observing and studying ASEAN, and researchers who have delved extensively into various aspects of ASEAN and the region.

These 32 authors come from all over the world, thus making for a rich combination of ideas that add to the interesting flavour one finds in the book. Time will not permit me to name

all of them and fairness will not allow me to pick just a few. Suffice for me to say that some of them are present among us here today.

The common thread binding together all these pieces is the uncertainty of what lies ahead for ASEAN over the next half century. There are several important themes that emerge throughout the book. These are:

- The changing roles of superpowers and the impact of such changes on ASEAN and the region;
- The amplified prospect of traditional and non-traditional security threats in the region;
- The implications of trade protectionism and disruptive technology;
- Sustainability of the region's development;
- Frustration at ASEAN's perceived inability to evolve beyond its traditional principles at a satisfactory pace; and
- The heightening level of social consciousness warranting wider people participation in the greater ASEAN project.

The book consists of ten chapters, each containing at least two contributions. They cover areas that the co-editors and publisher hope to be comprehensive enough for the purpose of anticipating the next fifty years of ASEAN. I would not want to dampen the excitement and anticipation by going too much into the substance of the book. You will be able to go through the content of the book and know the names of the writers, of course, if you buy the book later.

We will have the opportunity of listening to some of the writers express their views at the panel discussion that follows the launching of the book by His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

On behalf of the Board and Management of ISIS Malaysia, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the writers who have contributed their valuable time, intellectual prowess and scholarly minds to the making of the book, and to Prof Mari Pangestu for her time and patience in co-editing it.

I also wish to thank the ASEAN Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, for their support without which this project would not have been a reality.

My thanks also go to the staff of ISIS Malaysia, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this project; from the inception of the idea of a conference on ASEAN, first mooted by Wisma Putra during Malaysia's Chairmanship in 2015, to the publication of this book.

Finally I thank all of you for being present here today. I recognise individuals who have been deeply involved in ASEAN in various ways, as ministers, diplomats, senior officials, business leaders, academics and researchers and strong supporters of ASEAN integration. I am sure

the nation and ASEAN value your contribution. I hope your experience and expertise could be captured in future publications. ISIS Malaysia would be honoured to work on those.

Let me end with a personal reminiscence. Some thirty years ago, while working on the final dissertation for a master's degree at the University of Lancaster, I was confronted with a dearth of materials on Southeast Asia and ASEAN available in the United Kingdom. I had to rely a lot on inter-library loans from SOAS in London and the University of Hull, with cyberspace being a thing of the future then.

Thirty years on, I dare say that there is an abundance of literature on ASEAN available. The book, "ASEAN FutureForward", is another small step aimed at expanding the store of knowledge on ASEAN. ISIS Malaysia is happy to have taken that step.

Ampun Tuanku,

Sekianlah sahaja sembah ucapan patik. Patik sekali lagi dengan penuh hormat dan takzimnya merafak sembah menjunjung kasih di atas limpah perkenan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku sudi mencemar Duli berangkat ke majlis pada hari ini.

Ampun Tuanku Beribu Ampun Sembah Patik Mohon Diampun

Wabillahitaufik, Walhidayah, Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh