

Welcoming Remarks by Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Chairman, ISIS Malaysia

Delivered at the CSCAP General Conference

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KL Hilton

Ralph Cossa, Founding Member of CSCAP; Chairman USCSCAP,
Excellencies,

Esteemed CSCAP members,

Distinguished Role Players,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

On behalf of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and my Co-Chair Charles Labrecque, let me welcome you to the 14th CSCAP General Conference. We are delighted to host you all here in Kuala Lumpur.

The last time we hosted such an event was back in Jakarta 2021, under the able hands of our CSCAP Indonesia colleagues over at CSIS.

Then, the world was just rebuilding itself from the pandemic. Across the two days, we discussed topics across the board including the state of great power competition, and the prospects of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP); economic security through infrastructure development, energy transition and digitalisation; global health cooperation; and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Certainly, many of those topics remain as real concerns for us today. Some have made progress, some still need serious work. The competition-cooperation dynamic underlying major power relations today continue to influence the regional strategic landscape.

What it means is that many of these developments should not be taken for granted. Collectively, we should be proactive in managing these risks before they become unwieldy. The overarching question is: How should the multilateral security frameworks like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meetings (ADMM) adapt and respond to these challenges?

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a Track 2 organisation, CSCAP provides the mechanism for scholars, intellectuals and officials in their private capacities to discuss these types of issues and challenges in the region.

CSCAP has also traditionally engaged with the ARF on current and trending matters of regional security through consultations, meetings and publications. We have contributed analyses on a wide range of issues such as preventive diplomacy, energy security, non-proliferation and disarmament and regional security architecture.

The memoranda produced by various CSCAP Study Groups have been useful in providing policy recommendations while the publication of our CSCAP Regional Security Outlook, highlights regional security concerns to advance regional security cooperation at official levels. We believe that the CRSO needs to be widely publicised and disseminated to reach the people who matter most. CSCAP is grateful for the support given by others in this endeavour, in particular, governments and other institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is also an opportune time for Malaysia as we assume the Chairmanship of ASEAN next year. This is a significant responsibility that comes at a particularly critical juncture for Southeast Asia and the broader region.

To welcome this new phase in the institution's history, we see the launch of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, which is a natural evolution from the previous Vision 2025, where we aim to ensure that our regional community becomes more resilient, innovative, dynamic and people centred.

Driven by values that have manifested in the Madani Malaysia principles, the theme for ASEAN 2025 "Inclusivity and Sustainability" seeks to navigate ASEAN's challenges and to manage them with holistic solutions.

As ASEAN Chair, Malaysia is fully committed to fostering collaborative engagement with fellow ASEAN member states, dialogue partners and international organisations to continue pursuing the peace, stability and shared prosperity that saw the creation of this institution. And we are most fortunate that our Foreign Minister Dato' Seri Utama Mohamad Hassan, would be joining us tomorrow to elaborate on our vision for the chairmanship in his keynote address.

Within CSCAP, we have been discussing the possible role of CSCAP beyond just supporting the ARF. The outcome of past summits should provide the impetus for CSCAP to closely examine the various possibilities. This would include for CSCAP to be able to directly plug into the work of the EAS, ADMM Plus and other mechanisms, in addition to our existing linkages with the ARF.

In this regard, maintaining this close rapport and cooperation between CSCAP and the respective Track 1 mechanisms through the ASEAN Chair and Chair of ARF is crucial.

The CSCAP General Conference enables us to reach out to a wider audience of interested policymakers and shapers, including emerging young leaders in the region.

I'd like to thank all of those within and outside CSCAP for bringing together this distinguished group of speakers and participants today. I look forward to keen and insightful exchanges during this General Conference.

Thank you.