

Intervention
By His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.),
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the 30th ASEAN Summit (Plenary)
on 29 April 2017 at 11.15 – 12.15 hrs., Reception Room, PICC, Manila

Mr. Chairman,

Your Majesty and Excellencies,

1. I would like to express my appreciation to President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for the warm welcome, and to congratulate the Philippines for their Chairmanship of ASEAN this year. This is an auspicious year as it marks the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN since the signing of the ASEAN Declaration in Bangkok in 1967.

Mr. Chairman,

Your Majesty and Excellencies,

2. For over half a century, we have preserved peace, stability, and prosperity in the region together. Not only have we provided assistance to alleviate problems caused by natural disasters but we have successfully responded to emergencies in urgent times of need. However, as we have reached the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN, it is timely that we review seriously what ASEAN can do to improve itself to meet peoples' expectations in the region, particularly the benefits derived from ASEAN, especially now that it has become a Community. Drawing upon the BREXIT lessons of the European Union, ASEAN must further strengthen the Community to be one that is people-centred and leaves no one behind. We must ensure that all ten Member States move forward quickly together in line with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, especially implementing legal agreements supporting a Community that promotes human security and is creatively connected to the global community. Therefore, I believe that ASEAN should give priority to these following areas:
3. First, ASEAN should be dynamic, innovative, and creatively connected to the Asia-Pacific region as well as the global arena. ASEAN should give priority to factors that drive the economic growth of the ASEAN Community, especially the promotion of innovation from start-ups, the entry into the digital economy, and new industries. These are currently Thailand's main development priorities through the implementation of the Thailand 4.0 Policy. Furthermore, the development of an ASEAN brand for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), can be considered as the backbone of the

region's industry, to help strengthen ASEAN's economy. Thus, ASEAN should set up a system to improve the credit worthiness ranking standard of the region's MSMEs. This would help boost the capacity of MSMEs to seek loans and expand its markets within and outside the region.

4. ASEAN should speed up the implementation of seamless connectivity within ASEAN and with other regions, as outlined in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025), particularly connecting with Northeast Asia, South Asia, America, and Europe. Accordingly, ASEAN should ensure the quick entry into force of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit. Thailand is also improving Special Border Economic Zones (SEZs) and continuously promoting investments with neighbouring countries through the ASEAN+1 formula to connect manufacturing bases.
5. Secondly, ASEAN should strengthen its internal resilience and create immunity from challenges, especially non-traditional challenges. To face these challenges, I am pleased that ASEAN has made considerable progress in tackling regional haze, particularly after the adoption of the ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap last year. Significant progress is seen in the implementation of the Chiang Rai Initiative between Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. Another achievement is the enforcement of the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP). Meanwhile, three more issues that we must continue to push forward are 1) systematic cooperation regarding border management through effective exchange of information and intelligence; (2) promotion of ASEAN's capabilities in dealing with challenges such as terrorism and extremism. ASEAN can implement both development and anti-terrorism policies together through the exchange of intelligence and best practices on moderation and interfaith dialogue. This involves solving the root cause of problems which include lack of economic and social opportunities, poverty, human rights violations and injustice. At the same time, we should promote ASEAN's capacity in dealing with cyber security threats/challenges through the establishment of an ASEAN Cyber Centre. In this connection, Thailand stands ready to host an ASEAN brainstorming conference on this matter, through cooperation with external partners; and 3) set up a preparedness system for natural disasters in line with the Disaster Emergency Logistics System of ASEAN and also through existing centres in the region such as the ASEAN Centre of Military Medicine and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre.
6. Thirdly, ASEAN should move towards becoming a Community that promotes human security, whereby all stakeholders have a role in and benefit from ASEAN. To this end, ASEAN should enhance cooperation at the regional

level in achieving the sustainable development goals and at the same time, build partnerships with countries outside the region and international organizations. Through such partnerships, concrete projects could be developed such as those dealing with environmental protection and green growth, promoting economic empowerment of women, and addressing malnutrition and stunting of children.

7. Lastly, ASEAN must effectively prepare in all aspects for the transition towards an ageing society. It is also important to promote the establishment of a centre to exchange information on this issue, such as an ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation.
8. Thank you.