

Congratulatory Message
by H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the Opening Ceremony of
ASEAN-China Year of Media Exchanges
Beijing, People's Republic of China, 20 February 2019

(Read out by H. E. Mr. Virasakdi Futrakul, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs)

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government who is the Chair of ASEAN in 2019, I have the honour to extend my sincere congratulations to the Government of the People's Republic of China on the launch of the ASEAN-China Year of Media Exchanges. This initiative clearly indicates China's strong commitment in promoting the important role of the media in ASEAN-China relations as well as in reinforcing the overall ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership.

Since the 21st ASEAN-China Summit last year adopted the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership Vision 2030, ASEAN and China have been cooperating in elevating all aspects of our Strategic Partnership to achieve an ASEAN-China community of shared future. This community is based on a strong foundation of relations with China who is ASEAN's largest trading partner, third largest source of foreign direct investment, and largest source of tourists. The ASEAN-China Year of Media Exchanges will provide a dynamic impetus for the advancement and realization of the Vision 2030, in particular the people-to-people partnership, thereby contributing greatly to the regional peace and prosperity.

Thailand has declared that the theme of our ASEAN Chairmanship this year is "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability." Accordingly, Thailand aims to pursue the "Sustainability of Things (SOT)" or sustainability in all dimensions, through close cooperation and partnerships with our friends, in particular China, and the international community, to promote a people-centered ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind and looks to the future.

People-to-people connectivity is therefore one of our core strategic drivers which we will take forward together with our partners. In this connection, an extensive series of activities covering the areas of news, publications, broadcasting, films, television and new media have been planned throughout the year 2019 in various forms such as forums, co-production, exchange visits, capacity building programs, and festivals. These cooperative activities will promote mutual knowledge and understanding, skills development and networking between ASEAN and Chinese media, contributing to the strengthening of the people-to-people partnership between ASEAN and China.

We also seek to broaden ASEAN-China Partnerships at all levels to overcome rising challenges in the region and enhance connectivity within ASEAN and with the world. The synergy of the linkages among the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the Master Plan of the Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Thailand) 2019-2023 in areas such as seamless transportation, infrastructure connectivity, digital connectivity and economic corridors connectivity will further strengthen the rise of Asia as the new global economic center. The media can play a constructive role in promoting such connectivity by strengthening the media networks throughout the Asian region to enable the peoples in Asia and in the world to be informed about news from Asian perspectives in the era of Asia rising. Thailand therefore hopes that our Connecting the Connectivities objective during our chairmanship of ASEAN will strengthen connectivity between ASEAN and our friends such as China and the world at large.

Finally, Thailand is convinced that the ASEAN-China Year of Media Exchanges will contribute significantly to the further strengthening of ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership, and in particular, the ASEAN-China People-to-People Partnership in building an ASEAN-China Community of Shared Future.
