

## **Remarks**

**H.E. Retno L.P. Marsudi  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Indonesia**

**On the occasion of the 51<sup>st</sup> ASEAN DAY**

**ASEAN Secretariat  
Jakarta, 8 August 2018**

**His Excellency Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary  
General of ASEAN,  
Excellencies Ambassadors,  
Family members of ASEAN,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb,  
Good morning...  
Selamat pagi...**

1. From the outset, let me thank our ASEAN family members... and friends from outside of Southeast Asia...
  - ➔ for the outpouring of sympathy and condolences offered to the people and Government of Indonesia;
  - ➔ especially the victims and the bereaved families;
  - ➔ following the recent earthquake in Lombok.
2. I was in Bali attending the 7<sup>th</sup> Bali Process Ministerial Conference... when the 7- magnitude-scale earthquake hit the island of Lombok.
3. The Government of Indonesia has been undertaking its utmost... to ensure an effective an emergency rescue operation...
4. So far, we have heard of no foreign nationals died during the earthquake...

5. We have established a call centre... to help provide information 24/7.
6. Our prayers and thoughts are with the peoples in the affected areas.

### **Excellencies,**

7. A few days ago, we, the foreign ministers, attended the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and Post Ministerial Conference... in Singapore.
8. I have **two major observations** to share... based on my engagement with non-ASEAN countries.
9. I have a strong conviction that:
  - ➔ **First**, ASEAN-led processes attract and provide **concrete avenues**... for countries in the region to cooperate... in resolving our common challenges. No major power is absent.
  - ➔ **Second**, our principles, visions and outlook for cooperation in the region have been and are carried out successfully...
    - ✓ By now, the TAC has been accessed by 37 countries from around the globe...
    - ✓ They adhere to the principles and outlook ASEAN wants to project...
10. That is the envisaged vision of our founding fathers in 1976...
  - ➔ ASEAN has been instrumental in creating an ecosystem of peace, stability, and prosperity...

→ Not only for within but beyond its own region...

11. Today, we are here to celebrate the 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN... the **moment to reflect** upon...

→ our departing point;

→ where we are today

→ where we are heading.

12. Ever since its birth, ASEAN has been facing key challenges.

13. I can identify at least **TWO MAJOR AND CONSTANT** challenges:

→ **Externally**... how to keep **ASEAN relevant** with the changing strategic environment, and;

→ **Internally**... how to enhance **ASEAN's usefulness**... to our own peoples... economically, politically, and socially.

## **Excellencies,**

14. **With the external challenge**... we must admit that ASEAN has journeyed far...

15. Looking back... ASEAN helped **transform** Southeast Asia...

→ From an area of enmity... into a region of amity;

→ From a pocket of poverty... into a land of opportunities, and;

→ From a zone of instability... into an ecosystem of peace, stability, and prosperity.

16. ASEAN's role and contribution to peace even go beyond Southeast Asia.

17. ASEAN-led mechanisms are now widely referred to... when it comes to regional security and economic architectures.

18. Nonetheless... our success should not make us complacent.

19. We are often criticized for being too slow... too distant... and even too vague... in our response...

→ Towards the fast-changing regional and global events.

20. Like it or not... ASEAN has been in the centre of strategic shifts... that is now taking place in the Indo-Pacific region.

21. **We are in the centre... geographically speaking.**

22. However, **we are yet to be central... when it comes to the Indo-Pacific Cooperation.**

23. In this regard, my suggestion is simple:

→ we must move forward...

→ **from a geographical mentality...**

→ **to a visionary mind-set...**

→ to become central in ideas!

24. Our failure to play a central role here... would be very costly.
25. For five decades... we continuously and successfully protect and prevent Southeast Asia... from becoming a zone of proxy.
26. Today, with the rising prominence of the **Indo-Pacific region**... ASEAN must be visionary... and anticipative... to ensure that any cooperation in Indo-Pacific would be:
- ➔ Inclusive;
  - ➔ Open;
  - ➔ Transparent;
  - ➔ Based on respect for international law.
27. We must **re-double** our investment in the Indo-Pacific region... the way we did with the Asia Pacific in the past five decades.
28. I envision... **the next five decades would be the age of Indo-Pacific.**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

29. With the second challenge... the **internal challenge**... we often hear our own people criticize ASEAN...
- ➔ Even expressing their pessimism;
  - ➔ Over ASEAN's capability to move progressively.

30. Despite our continuous efforts... even tangible progress in nurturing the ASEAN Community... ASEAN is still seen as **less connected** to the needs of our own people.
31. We cannot afford to let ASEAN move further away... let alone disconnect... from its own constituents... the people.
32. The **first three words** inscribed in the Preamble of ASEAN Charter are precisely: WE, THE PEOPLES...
33. That is our **soul**... as an Association.
34. There are ways and means we can ensure ASEAN's relevance with its peoples.
35. **First**... continue with our **robust economic development**... at all levels... national and regional.
36. Economic development is key to unlocking opportunities... and enhancing prosperity.
37. Our success in bringing prosperity... will earn the much-needed trust from the people... and stronger support for ASEAN.

38. **Second... invest more in our peoples...** allow more interactions... and cooperation among themselves...
39. Our job here is to ensure greater facilitation... of people-to-people... especially among the youth... businesses...
40. **Third**, as I often find myself repeating... **walk the talk!**
41. We are not lacking in terms of plans of action for cooperation.
42. We just need to renew our political will... to make them actionable.

### **Excellencies,**

43. Realising all the above ideals is a **tall order**... that requires effective collaboration.
44. This is why and where we need a **strong, competent, and innovative ASEAN Secretariat**.
45. In my view... the ASEAN Secretariat must... intensively and systematically... run **massive information-sharing programs**... about ASEAN to our public...
  - ➔ ASEAN has made good progress;
  - ➔ But they are not well-known to the wider public.



46. **Lack of awareness** from the public has caused unnecessary criticism towards ASEAN.

→ Something we must urgently resolve and rectify.

47. The ASEAN Secretariat... with its resources, know-how, and capacity... is well situated to do just that.

48. Indonesia remains strongly committed... to support the ASEAN Secretariat.

49. With that note, let me close by saying:

→ Happy Birthday, ASEAN...

→ **Selamat Ulang Tahun, ASEAN.**

50. I thank you.

**-o0o-**