

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATION CEREMONY
ASEAN SECRETARIAT 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

Excellency Ambassador Nina Hachigian

Excellencies

Scholarship Recipients

Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning and welcome to the ASEAN Secretariat. We are pleased to host this ceremony to acknowledge and congratulate the ASEAN – US Fulbright Scholarship Recipients for 2015.

This is an important event within the framework of ASEAN-US ties, a very long partnership that symbolizes the friendship and close cooperation between both sides over many years.

I do not intend to make a lengthy speech but will confine my remarks to three points.

First is to congratulate this year's recipients of the US Fulbright Scholarship. Each of you deserves our admiration because I know how tough the selection process is to be awarded this prestigious scholarship.

You are among the cream in your respective countries. The topic that each of you intends to specialize in are diverse covering a wide spectrum of disciplines.

I am confident that the level of support and academic guidance that you as Fulbright Scholars will receive in each of the tertiary institutions that you will be attending will be fulfilling and enriching.

And you will benefit tremendously from the subject specialists, lecturers and tutors who will guide you along the way until graduation.

So my advice is to make full use of your time in the US University to further enhance your area of specialization. At the same time please make full use of your stay in the US to understand the culture and society.

Make friends and share with them knowledge of our region – this is part of the process to strengthen people – to – people relations. And as youths and the future generation of leaders, friends made during your stay there will promote continued close ties between our region and the US

My second point is about this US program to offer opportunities for ASEAN youth to study in institutions of higher learning in the United States.

We are appreciative of this US initiative that was launched in July 2012 to mark the 35th Anniversary of the ASEAN-US Partnership.

This program will certainly go a long way in enhancing educational opportunities for ASEAN scholars. And it is noteworthy that through this program, US scholars also have opportunities to study and research issues related to our region.

Overall it will promote better understanding and links between ASEAN and the US. And it also reflects the US commitment to this partnership for mutual benefit.

Finally, this is an important year for ASEAN as we move forward to becoming a Community which our Leaders will declare when they meet in Kuala Lumpur in November this year.

This is a momentous development for our region reflecting our desire for greater cohesiveness, integration and a people-centered, people-oriented ASEAN.

ASEAN Community is about our people and our commitment to ensure that our region remains stable and peaceful for our citizens to progress and prosper, to have a better-livelihood and quality of life.

And you, our scholars should be proud that you have this opportunity to further your dreams because of ASEAN's close relations with our external partners and their commitment to help ASEAN develop and prosper.

In closing, let me repeat what I usually tell scholarship recipients in previous ceremonies that I have officiated in when I was serving in other countries.

My message is be thankful first to your parents, your teachers and schools for nurturing your academic and intellectual talents. And you must not forget the opportunities you received in your community and society.

Finally, I request that after you have successfully completed your intellectual pursuits, please come back and serve your society, and contribute to your community and fellow nationals so that all can benefit from your expertise. And for this group of 2015 Fulbright Scholars, please also contribute to ASEAN as a grouping in whatever way you can.

I wish each of you all the success as you commence this important phase of your development as a young scholar.

Thank you.