

ASEAN Day Remarks
by H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN
23 August 2013, ASEAN Hall

Excellencies, Colleagues, Friends

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to welcome you to our celebration of ASEAN's 46th Anniversary. Today, we commemorate with pride the founding of ASEAN 46 years ago on 8 August 1967. With great fondness and respect, we recall the spirit of friendship and solidarity that has been bonding our peoples together in a community of nations. Our theme this year: "Our People, Our Future Together" perfectly captures our vision of the ASEAN Community that we are building. It is an ASEAN Community able to keep our peace and stability, an ASEAN Community that enables our economies to flourish and our peoples to have a better quality of life in dignity, an ASEAN Community based on rules and mutual respect .

We are building such an ASEAN Community in large and small ways, ASEAN ways. While we are setting the stage for free trade and investment , we are also ensuring that our economic gains are shared and felt by each and every ordinary ASEAN citizen. While we are crafting overarching regional frameworks, we are also making sure that our programmes on climate change, energy, food security, social welfare and many other pressing concerns will benefit every man, woman and child in the region. While we are promoting ASEAN awareness to the public, we are also reaching out and instilling a sense of ASEAN identity in each and every ASEAN citizen.

As we seek to find consensus among us and adhere to our own rules, strengthening the institutions of our Community, we are proactively integrating ourselves into the global community of nations.

And, in such large and small ways, we can be proud of what we have been able to achieve the past year. The Treaty that for nearly half a century has bonded us is finding its life far beyond the region. For the first time, we have produced for our peoples a legal shelter to protect them from fears and want. With 80 percent of the work we planned to do to make our economies competitive and resilient, our development balanced, equitable and sustainable having been completed, work started on integration beyond our own region, while the international community keeps growing and we also grow, we are already seeing by 2015 a much larger picture than our original sketch.

But celebration is not just about reflection. As any family would, ASEAN has had its share of internal and external challenges. In the face of these challenges, ASEAN needs to further demonstrate the strength and resilience that lie at our core. With that and the continued support and cooperation of our partners, we can be sure of a vibrant and bright future for ASEAN and our peoples.

On this festive occasion, I wish to extend to all friendly countries partners of ASEAN and all those having been with us in our journey toward a better ASEAN our sincere thanks and gratitude for their support and assistance and assure them of the continued support of the ASEAN Secretariat in strengthening our cooperation.

I thank you all for your presence!