

Congratulatory Remarks

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Meeting of Governors/Mayors of the Capitals of ASEAN 2013
“ASEAN Goes Local: Contributing to the ASEAN Community 2015”

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Distinguished Governors and Mayors from ASEAN, welcome to Jakarta!

On behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat, I would like to extend heartiest congratulations for the commendable initiative that brings together Governors and Mayors of the Capitals of ASEAN to deliberate on prospective contributions of the local governments to the ASEAN community building processes set for end of 2015.

ASEAN is intensifying efforts to achieve the objective of establishing the ASEAN Community. We are pushing ahead into the final laps to deliver common commitment to realize ASEAN as a “Single Market, Single Production Base” – on time and on target.

The truth of the matter is that we do not have much of a choice. Without ASEAN, our Member States will have to face global challenges on their own. In the current state of global uncertainties, that is like a small boat being tossed about in stormy waters. While ASEAN may not be as huge as some countries, the unity of ten countries has raised the status of ASEAN to an ocean liner.

The theme chosen for the current meeting, “ASEAN Goes Local,” is indeed close to our hearts. It reminds us that the aspired ASEAN Community is more than about being a hub of trade, investment, and services. A very important objective of the ASEAN Community is realizing a people-oriented ASEAN in which all sectors of society are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the process of ASEAN integration and community building.

This means, ASEAN must be rooted; participation and ownership of all segments of the society are paramount in the ASEAN community building endeavours.

The emphasis on a people-centered ASEAN underlines the importance of this forum. As Governors and Mayors, you have a close-up view on how the regional integration permeates to and bring about changes at the local level.

With integration, there will be opportunities and challenges. Some of our residents may relish the rich opportunities, some others may be anxious about the looming challenges. We need to ascertain that the fruits of economic integration are shared by the peoples and their families.

Adjustments may be called for. New ideas and ways of doing things may be necessary. This forum is an excellent platform for us to discuss and exchange ideas and best practices. We may even explore the need for sub-regional cooperation at the provincial and city level, to leverage on unique strengths for mutual growth.

Altogether, your participation will be indispensable in the development of the ASEAN Community.

On that note, we look forward to hearing your thoughts on how you can further enhance the establishment of ASEAN Community 2015. Rest assured that the ASEAN Secretariat will be glad to support you in this endeavor.

I wish you every success in your meeting here in Jakarta.

Thank You.