

**WELCOME REMARKS  
BY H.E. LE LUONG MINH, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN  
DURING THE VISIT BY THE PRESIDENT OF VIET NAM TO  
THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT**

*28 June 2013*

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*Your Excellency, President Truong Tan Sang and Madam Mai Thi Hanh,  
Your Excellency, Deputy Prime Minister Hoang Trung Hai,  
Your Excellency, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh,  
Your Excellency, Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Office Dao  
Viet Trung  
Distinguished Members of the Delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam,  
Your Excellency Minister-in-attendance Dr. IR. Suswono, Minister of  
Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia and Ibu Mieke  
WahyuniSuswono*

*Your Excellencies, Ambassadors,  
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corp,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

It is indeed a great honour for me and the other Leaders and the staff the ASEAN Secretariat to welcome you, Your Excellency, Mr. President, and your distinguished delegation to the ASEAN Headquarters. Over the years, the ASEAN Secretariat has had the honour of welcoming the Heads of State/Government from various ASEAN countries. Your Excellency's visit today to the ASEAN Secretariat which is considered the vibrant beating heart of ASEAN cooperation is another strong manifestation of the commitment to ASEAN by its member States at the highest levels of leadership.

Having overcome the test of time over more than four decades of its existence, ASEAN has become a dynamic organization and a force for good to be reckoned with in ensuring peace, stability and promoting cooperation and prosperity in the region.

With the ASEAN Charter as its constitutional framework and the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community as its action plan, ASEAN is steadfastly moving towards a Community by 2015. ASEAN's achievements could not have been possible without the concerted and tireless efforts by all members of the ASEAN family, in which Viet Nam has been playing a very active and constructive role.

Viet Nam's admission to ASEAN was a historic landmark in the Association's evolution and maturity, setting in motion and giving momentum for ASEAN to embrace all the nations of Southeast Asia. Your Excellency's visit to the ASEAN Secretariat today, the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, in fact comes exactly 18 years, less a month, after Viet Nam's admission on 28 July 1995. The number 28, and more so the number 8, can be considered by many as auspicious for us. If we did believe in it, we believe also that what Viet Nam has been contributing to ASEAN is not just auspiciousness. During the past 18 years, Viet Nam has proven to be an "active, proactive and responsible member of ASEAN", making important contributions to the vitality, unity, cohesion and integration of our Association and its efforts to maintain peace, security and stability and to promote cooperation and development in the region. The success of Viet Nam's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2010 with the theme "Towards an ASEAN Community: from Vision to Action" indeed constitutes an important contribution to ASEAN's Community building.

In recent years, Viet Nam has also been instrumental in further enhancing and deepening the many facets of ASEAN cooperation and ASEAN's engagement with its partners. The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, which aims to bring ASEAN's peoples, goods, services and capital closer together in seamless linkages, was drafted and adopted during Viet Nam's chairmanship. Viet Nam has also been, and continues to be, a strong driver of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration towards narrowing the development gap between ASEAN Member States. The first ever ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus was convened in Ha Noi in 2010. Viet Nam is also ranking high in term of the pace of implementation of the measures under blueprints for building the ASEAN political-security, economic and social-cultural communities. While ASEAN's integration is an on-going and evolving process and while we are discussing Community building, ASEAN is already preparing work on charting out its

future direction in a post-2015 agenda, I am confident that with its strong commitment to integration and with its dedicated Leadership, Viet Nam will continue to make still greater contributions to the development of an ASEAN of “One Vision” and “One Identity”.

On that note, it gives me great pleasure to invite Your Excellency, Mr. President, to address and share your insights and vision about ASEAN and Viet Nam with all of us gathered here.

I thank you!