

**11<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE  
ASEAN SENIOR OFFICIALS ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS (SOMCA)**  
12 May 2015, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta

Welcoming Remarks by

**H.E. Dr. AKP Mochtan**  
Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs

*SOMCA Leaders  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

- It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome you all to the ASEAN Secretariat. We don't have many opportunities to organise SOMCA meeting here and therefore we are privileged to serve SOMCA's 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at our very own ASEAN Hall.
- I feel truly gratified that SOMCA has taken the lead in the continuous promotion of ASEAN's culture, heritage, and traditions across the region. This is indeed crucial to build appreciation of ASEAN's diversity while at the same underscore our common values.
- I also take note of SOMCA's long, proud list accomplishments. To mention a few, some of the recent ones include the Festival of ASEAN Cultural Expressions; the ASEAN City of Culture; and issuance of the Hue Declaration on Culture for ASEAN's Sustainable Development, among others.
- Through the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, SOMCA and AMCA have also enabled the first ever cultural restoration project for sites affected by typhoon Haiyan and the earthquake in the Visayas region, both in the Philippines.
- Altogether, these activities have brought ASEAN closer to the people, enabling them to feel the tangible benefits of being ASEAN citizens.
- The ASEAN's journey continues, however, and this means our home works, too, are unfinished. At this juncture, we are awaiting two particularly momentous events:
  - Launch of the ASEAN Community;
  - Launch of a new, post-2015 ASEAN Vision and its Attendant Documents to guide us as we traverse beyond 2015.

- In tandem with these, our Leaders have stressed the main values and direction to guide our journey ahead. I would like to underline two main points that the Leaders reaffirmed at the recent 26<sup>th</sup> Summit in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi, Malaysia:
  - A people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN
  - Promoting global movement of moderates.
- All these combined, we are looking at transformation of ASEAN into “A Community of Opportunities.”
- The task before us is ensuring that culture and the arts will continue to make effective, tangible contributions amidst all these developments.
- On building a people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN, a key challenge is broadening and deepening appreciation of our cultural diversity, going beyond mere showcasing national heritage and pride and elevating it to be the main platform toward genuine and lasting regional identity and sense of ownership among the ASEAN peoples.
- On the promotion of the global movement of moderates, the culture sector is called on to be at the forefront of the efforts on promoting inter-cultural understanding and mutual respect among the peoples of ASEAN and the global community.
- With regard to ASEAN as a Community of Opportunities, we need to continue promoting understanding to our citizens what it means to live in and benefit from an integrated, inter-connected ASEAN Community. For this, ASEAN has developed the “ASEAN Communication Master Plan” (ACMP). We need to work out how to translate and apply the ACMP to the target audiences and stakeholders under the Culture and Arts sector.
- These are only some of the lead questions or pointers that the meeting may wish to ponder upon. They are far from being exhaustive and serve to illustrate the importance of this meeting in taking up far-reaching topics and agenda at this particularly exciting juncture of the ASEAN journey.
- Cognizant of the importance of partnership with external parties, we also seek SOMCA’s guidance on enhancing cooperation with ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners, especially the Plus Three countries and their institutions such as the ASEAN Centres in China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and other non-governmental organisations such as Japan Foundation to pursue effectively our common goals of promoting the centrality of culture and the arts in advancing mutual respect and meaningful partnership throughout the region.
- On that note, I wish you a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Jakarta.

*Thank you.*