

Speech by
H.E. Le Luong Minh
Secretary-General of ASEAN
At the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the
Confederation of ASEAN Journalists
27 Nov 2015, Hanoi

- *H.E. Mr. Vu Duc Dam, Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*
- *Mr. Thuan Huu, President of Viet Nam Journalists' Association and President of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists,*
- *Journalists from ASEAN Member States, China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea,*
- *Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen*

I would like to thank Viet Nam Journalists' Association and the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists for inviting me to this important meeting in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists. Throughout its history, in striving for its lofty objective, the CAJ has contributed significantly to the promotion of closer relations and cooperation among the region's journalists in advancing journalism towards a healthy, free and responsible press that constitutes an important stakeholder helping our citizens to make informed decisions in their interests and those of their communities.

In Kuala Lumpur last weekend, at the 27th ASEAN Summit, the Leaders of ASEAN formally proclaimed the establishment of the ASEAN Community to take effect on 31 December 2015.

After decades of Community building, with a strong collective will and tremendous efforts of all Member States, especially since the adoption of the Roadmap to an ASEAN Community, ASEAN has become one of the most successful politically cohesive, economically integrated, socially responsible and people-oriented regional organizations enabling our economies to grow and our peoples to reap the benefits of regional peace, stability and prosperity

Integrating on all three fronts - political-security, economic and social-cultural - ASEAN has fundamentally shaped the regional architecture, putting in place strong fundamentals positioning ASEAN on a firm and assured footing, ready to take on a more ambitious, far-reaching regional agenda beyond 2015. Towards this end, the Leaders also endorsed ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Charting future directions for ASEAN over the next ten years, building upon the progress already achieved, ASEAN Community Vision 2025 will guide ASEAN in taking on a more proactive leadership role in defining the region's architecture, enabling ASEAN to respond more effectively to existing and emerging challenges, ultimately realizing a totally integrated, really people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN.

With ASEAN's efforts to fostering a sense of belonging and ASEAN identity among our peoples, reliable channels of communication that will effectively inform, educate and empower people for the cause of Community

consolidation through responsible journalism are required. The role of the media in the region that you represent here today is thus critical.

The celebration of the 40th anniversary of the CAJ is taking place at a time when ASEAN is entering a new phase of evolution with the establishment of the ASEAN Community for which peace has been “our goal from the very start” and “prosperity to last.” As ASEAN is marking a momentous milestone and moving closer to its 50th anniversary, it is an opportune moment for both reflection and creation. The situation in the region at the time of ASEAN’s founding has totally changed today. ASEAN is facing altogether a different set of ever-evolving challenges which must be addressed to ensure ASEAN’s effectiveness and perpetuity. As key sources of information for our peoples, ASEAN journalists are well positioned to explain, encourage discussions and clarify misconceptions to bring to the people the awareness and understanding of the very Community we are building, not only its opportunities to seize but also its challenges to overcome as this will, in turn, encourage them to engage and participate in our mutual efforts. In doing so, you have the support of the ASEAN Member States and relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies. In line with the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on a People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN Community, ASEAN has been undertaking various initiatives to bring ASEAN closer to the peoples.

The ASEAN Communication Master Plan was adopted in 2014. Under this plan, there are potential opportunities for us to work together. ASEAN will be producing a newspaper supplement on the ASEAN Community. This supplement will be produced in all Member States with one unified content and messages. We will make sure that the content is made available for all media to help amplify the messages.

ASEAN will also support third party advocates and commentators from influential journalists. We have already produced the ASEAN Economic Community key messages booklet and the ASEAN Resources Tool Kit--both downloadable from the ASEAN Secretariat website. Those can be used as references for ASEAN Community educators.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is said that “life begins at 40.” For the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists, this may mean a new season of growth, another era for expansion, and a time to benefit from what has been built up over the years. As an organization that aims to promote closer relations among ASEAN journalists, I encourage you to help organize the journalists and expand membership in all ten Member States so that CAJ can more fully reflect the ASEAN Community.

On this momentous occasion of your 40th anniversary and 18th General Assembly, I wish to extend to the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists warmest congratulations for your contributions to the cause of building a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious ASEAN Community. I wish the meeting success!

Thank you!