

Remarks
by H.E. Le Luong Minh,
Secretary-General of ASEAN
at the Official Launch of the 40th Anniversary of
ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations
20 February 2014, Makati City

Your Excellency Albert del Rosario, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines,

Your Honourable Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia,

Excellencies, Ambassadors representing ASEAN Member States and Australia

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia for inviting me to be part of this Official Launch of the 40th Anniversary of the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations.

Gathering here today to witness this important milestone of our partnership, we all are encouraged by the positive progress that has been achieved. Since its establishment in 1974, the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations have evolved and matured to cover a wide spectrum of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation. This comprehensive partnership has significantly contributed to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and brought about great benefits to the peoples of ASEAN and Australia.

For years, as a dedicated partner, Australia has been rendering strong and active support to ASEAN's efforts in building an integrated, connected and people-oriented Community and at the same time supporting ASEAN's central role in regional mechanisms and ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture. We appreciate Australia's continued commitment to the region through new initiatives to enhance cooperation with ASEAN in areas such as trade and investment, maritime security, transnational crime, food and energy security, climate change and disaster management, connectivity, education and people-to-people contacts.

As ASEAN is moving closer to the target of ASEAN Community 2015 and embarking on the process of building a vision for the Association to continue integration in the post-Community period, the 40th Anniversary of our partnership will be an opportunity for ASEAN and Australia not only to reflect on past achievements but also explore new ways to expand and deepen our engagement.

Looking forward to the outcomes of the ASEAN-Australia Commemorative Summit in Myanmar later this year, including the adoption of a new Plan of Action for the period 2014-2018 that will guide our partnership into the future, I am confident that with the strong foundation we have created and the common goals we are striving for, the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Partnership will be further strengthened and deepened to better serve our peoples and the interests of regional and global peace, development and prosperity.

Thank you!