

**Opening Remarks by DSG Alicia R. Bala**  
**Seminar on Enhancing Connectivity through Public-Private**  
**Partnerships**  
**The ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta**  
**10 April 2014**

Your Excellency Mr. Tan Hung Seng, Permanent Representative of Singapore to ASEAN,

Your Excellency Mr. Donald Bobiash, Ambassador of Canada to ASEAN,

Excellencies, Permanent Representatives of ASEAN Member States to ASEAN,

Excellencies, Ambassadors to ASEAN and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Speakers and Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon, Selamat siang, Assalamu Alaykum.

The last few years, we have seen developments and progress on one aspect of Community building: Connectivity – a significant priority for ASEAN. Back in October 2010, ASEAN Leaders adopted the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) to synergise efforts at the regional, sub-regional, and national levels, towards achieving the vision of building an integrated ASEAN Community by 2015.

It was estimated that ASEAN would need around USD 600 billion over 10 years to finance its infrastructure requirements. This would require new sources of capital other than government resources. The MPAC identified public-private sector partnership (PPP) as one of the strategies governments can work with the private sector in closing infrastructure

funding gaps and in providing high-quality delivery of infrastructure services. This afternoon's ASEAN-Canada seminar will explore these innovative approaches to infrastructure financing and enhance connectivity.

While the thrust of today's event is on public-private partnerships or PPP, I welcome you all to consider PPP also means people-to-people partnerships that are just as pivotal to achieve the tenets of ASEAN Connectivity and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, particularly people-to-people connectivity. The two "PPP" concepts are inter-related as the development of physical infrastructure is key to enhancing people-to-people connectivity.

As one of the three dimensions of ASEAN Connectivity, people-to-people connectivity is the socio-cultural glue that supports the various initiatives toward greater physical connectivity anchored on the regulatory and institutional reforms that are needed to ensure institutional connectivity in the ASEAN region. To this end, ASEAN has embarked on a number of initiatives to promote deeper intra-ASEAN social and cultural understanding and to encourage greater intra-ASEAN people mobility.

Let me take this opportunity to briefly update you on the key progress achieved in enhancing people-to-people connectivity, especially through the youth, education and information sectors

The ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme (AYVP) was established in 2013 as a regional youth volunteer platform for young peoples in ASEAN. ASEAN also places an important emphasis on promoting greater awareness of ASEAN among the youths through education. The ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook (for primary and secondary schools) was developed in 2012, and we are now working on ways to utilise the Sourcebook, in addition with the existing supplement materials on ASEAN studies in our schools. The ASEAN Studies Course is being implemented under the ASEAN University Network for undergraduate students to further inculcate the learning of ASEAN in today's youth. We

also harness the ICT for purposes of ASEAN's promotion, and educating our peoples on what is going on in ASEAN through an ASEAN Virtual Learning Resources Centre (AVLRC). This will be an information platform to generate greater awareness of ASEAN amongst its peoples. It will be developed in stages with the first phase focusing on ASEAN's people, culture, history, places of interest, education, youth and ICT, expected to be completed in 2015. We have also been promoting understanding of common cultures and history of ASEAN through regular cultural events such as the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts, the ASEAN Youth Camp, Festival of ASEAN Cultural Expressions, ASEAN City of Culture, etc. and a series of activities under the ASEAN Quiz at both regional and national levels.

We also need to foster greater interactions among the peoples through tourism. ASEAN remains an attractive destination for both regional and international tourists with growth of 14.51% and 9.9%, respectively, which brought about an increase of 12% in the total number of tourists visiting ASEAN to 90.2 million in 2013. Besides stepping up tourism development, we are also working on progressively liberalising visa restrictions and enhancing ASEAN air connectivity through the implementation of ASEAN Open Skies agreement as well as in engaging ASEAN Dialogue Partners in air services negotiation.

To further enhance people-to-people connectivity through partnerships, I would like to put forward the following three points.

First, it is important to consolidate and build on results achieved by existing initiatives, whether it is in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity or other ASEAN documents such as the APSC, AEC and ASCC Blueprints and IAI Work Plan. We have done a lot and we should leverage and synergise on available knowledge, expertise and technical resource to realise ASEAN Connectivity.

Second, we should promote collaboration through harmonised strategies at all levels to improve connectivity outcomes. This could involve coordinating efforts in connectivity programming including technical

assistance initiatives to leverage resources, at regional, sub-regional and national levels.

Third, there is a great need to develop resource mobilization strategy to support funding for physical infrastructure projects and for building our capacities to deliver institutional and people-to-people connectivity. We hope to forge further partnerships with our Dialogue Partners and external parties to support ASEAN Connectivity.

As the region embarked on public-private partnerships for economic infrastructure, I hope to see in the future that the use of public-private partnerships will be extended to the development of social infrastructure in the areas of health, education, climate change and disaster risk reduction and management, etc.

I wish to emphasise that MPAC is for the peoples of ASEAN and it will be the people who will make MPAC a platform for dynamic connection/interaction and engagement amongst stakeholders.

In closing, I want to acknowledge Ambassador Hung Seng and Ambassador Bobiash for initiating this seminar on Public-Private Partnerships.

I wish you a successful seminar.

Thank you.

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