

# DIPLOMATIC VOICE

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## The 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit

Malaysia hosted the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit from 26 to 27 April 2015 in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi. This was the first Summit hosted by Malaysia under its Chairmanship of ASEAN this year. The focus of the 26<sup>th</sup> Summit, among others, were on the progress made towards establishing the ASEAN Community by December 2015 and chart the next course of action to propel the regional grouping to greater heights. The ASEAN Summit is held twice a year and serves as a platform for ASEAN Leaders to gather and take stock of regional developments and ASEAN Community building.

The Summit was attended by all the Heads of State/Government of the ASEAN Member States, namely from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Summit was also attended by the Secretary General of ASEAN and his senior officials from the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Summit was preceded by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM), 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Political-Security



Community Council Meeting (APSC), 16<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting (ACC) and 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Community Council Meeting (AEC). The meetings were represented by the respective Foreign and Economic Ministers of ASEAN Member States. The Senior Officials of the ASEAN Member States and the Committee of Permanent Representative to ASEAN in Jakarta, Indonesia also held their respective meetings in preparation for the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Summit.

The Summit kicked off with a Gala Dinner hosted by the Prime Minister and Datin Sri Rosmah Mansor in honour of ASEAN Heads of State/Government on 26 April in Kuala

Lumpur. During the dinner, Dato' Sri Najib delivered his remarks welcoming all Leaders and delegates to the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit. The Gala Dinner was also graced with musical performances, which showcased Malaysia's diverse, yet unique cultures. The performance portrayed the story of Malaysia in three segments – constitutional monarchy, multiracial and modern Malaysia.


The Opening Ceremony of the Summit took place in the morning of 27 April. Dato' Sri Najib, in his address, emphasised that 2015 would be a milestone in the history of ASEAN as the vision of creating a single community will be realised by December 2015. He said that this is ASEAN's time, as community-building and deeper economic integration are moulded for a bold, inclusive and forward-looking future for ASEAN and its peoples.

Dato' Sri Najib also highlighted the importance for ASEAN to be seen to become more politically cohesive. In this regard, ASEAN should position itself as the third force in the region, after China and India.

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## Datuk Othman Hashim

Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

*Q. As the Secretary General of the Ministry, could you share the major areas of focus for the Ministry and its future directions?*

A. Over the years, the roles, functions and responsibilities of the Ministry have evolved with the times in keeping with the demands of the nation and the constantly changing global environment. Focus areas for the Ministry include enhancing bilateral relations and cooperation with our immediate neighbours and other countries; strengthening regional cooperation through ASEAN; participating actively at the United Nations as well as at regional and other international organisations, and providing protocol and consular services to our clients.

Looking forward, the Ministry is currently in the midst of drawing up its Strategic Plan for the period of 2016 to 2020, the year Malaysia would achieve its target as a high income developed economy. The 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan, which charts Malaysia's path towards achieving this goal, stated Malaysia's intent to be an "international voice of reason". As such, the Ministry has to formulate strategies and programmes towards this end and ensure that Malaysia continues to be proactive in the conduct of diplomacy. At the 8<sup>th</sup> Heads of Mission Conference last year, Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Abdul Razak set the tone for Malaysia's diplomacy towards and beyond 2020 in which Malaysia would assume the role of a middle power particularly in the Asia region. Malaysia would also continue to promote moderation in the conduct of its diplomacy and foreign policy.

*Q. Malaysia and the other ASEAN member states are moving towards the realisation of the ASEAN*

*Community. Can you share your thoughts on this?*

A. As a founding member of ASEAN, Malaysia attaches great importance in achieving the collective objectives set by ASEAN member countries. Malaysia strives to provide the leadership in making ASEAN a people-centred and rule-based organisation through the adoption of the ASEAN Charter, and reinvigorated ASEAN's partnership with its dialogue partners.



2015 will be a milestone in the history of ASEAN because the vision of creating a single community will be realised by December this year. As the Chairman of ASEAN, Malaysia is fully aware of the collective responsibility to formulate strategies for ASEAN which will provide the basis on how to further strengthen the spirit of ASEAN unity and deepen regional integration over the next ten years, up to 2025. These are two crucial undertakings for charting a bold, inclusive and forward-looking future for ASEAN and its peoples.

Malaysia also attaches great importance in making ASEAN more relevant to its peoples. The theme of our chairmanship *Our People, Our Community, Our Vision* reflects a "People-Centred" ASEAN. This means good governance, higher standards of living, sustainable development, empowerment of women, and greater opportunity for all in ASEAN. This will make

ASEAN a more powerful platform for the realisation of its peoples' aspirations.

Community-building effort is a continuous process and does not end in 2015. In fact it would mark the beginning of closer regional integration and would require the efforts of all member countries. Malaysia will continue to do its part in contributing towards maintaining ASEAN as a dynamic and vibrant regional player.

*Q. In view of the Government Transformation Programme, how has the Ministry changed the way it functions?*

A. In order to sustain Malaysia's competitiveness, the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) was introduced in 2010 to strengthen the delivery system of the public sector, a crucial component in

transforming Malaysia into a high-income economy by 2020. Since the GTP was introduced in 2010, the Ministry, like other government departments, has been ascribed KPIs to measure its performance and service delivery. This has inevitably changed our approach to the way we work at the Ministry.

We have set targets to meet our strategic objectives which are to strengthen bilateral diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, and ASEAN; to enhance public diplomacy, provide more effective and efficient protocol and consular services, and to develop our human capital.

We are constantly looking at ways to improve the way we conduct our work at the Ministry as well as our 109 diplomatic missions abroad. We have to encourage and instil a culture of creativity and innovation as the Ministry has limited resources to conduct all

its programmes. Integrity and accountability have become ever more important in ensuring our efficiency and effectiveness. Wisma Putra too has been constantly improving its engagement with the public particularly through its consular services and outreach programmes. As Malaysians travel abroad for tourism, employment, business, educational and other purposes, the demand for a more efficient and effective consular services has risen considerably and the Ministry will do its best to provide quality services to its clients and stakeholders.

*Q. Public diplomacy involves engaging the media and non-media channels to promote the country's policies, programmes and achievements. How is the Ministry maximising this tool?*

A. Public diplomacy is vital to communicate the Government's policies and interests to stakeholders and clients at the headquarters and its missions abroad. Modern day diplomacy is all about fast and effective communication in the conduct of international relations.

Public diplomacy involves constant engagement with the public. Happenings around the world are shared and made viral through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and other social media platforms. This compelled all ministries and agencies, Wisma Putra included, to update our websites up to the minute while attending to public queries. We have a multi-pronged approach to disseminate information as well as to clarify misrepresentations and allegations targeted at Malaysia using the social media as well as direct engagement.

We have been active in conducting our outreach programmes to Malaysians and the public at large in Malaysia and abroad. Each year the Ministry participates in exhibitions where visitors are able to pay a visit and interact with our officers for first-hand information on the role and functions of Wisma Putra. Public diplomacy will continue to

feature strongly in the Ministry's programmes as it is important that correct and timely information on Malaysia and the Ministry is shared with the general public.

*Q. How do you see IDFR and its role as the training arm of the Ministry? What are some of the areas that IDFR can improve on?*

A. IDFR's role is of the utmost importance in training officers and staff of the Ministry to ensure that they are equipped with the right knowledge and skills to excel as diplomats.

Since its establishment, IDFR has done very well in training not only Malaysian diplomats but foreign diplomats as well. It already has a good foundation of the basic courses and programmes on diplomacy and foreign relations. The main challenge is to make sure that the training programmes are kept current and are of the highest international standard.

It is timely that IDFR is embarking on a transformation programme which will enable it to strengthen its core areas of training in diplomacy and foreign relations to fulfil the expectations of its clients and stakeholders moving towards and beyond 2020. The transformation programme would allow for a review of past practices and introduce improvements in terms of curriculum, training methodology, as well as research and teaching capacity. There must be an effective blend of practitioner-oriented content together with an academic approach to the training provided.

*Q. How do you view the performance of our diplomats, particularly the young? What is your advice to them regarding their roles and responsibilities?*

A. In general, our diplomats have performed extremely well on the international stage. At the same time, we recognise that there are those who need constant supervision and motivation. The Ministry has always

done its best to nurture the talents that we have. Each and every member of our Ministry is invaluable as each has a part to play in various capacities at the Ministry. We handle many complex issues and our staffing at the headquarters and missions are very lean. Therefore we require each and every one of our officers and staff to be able to work independently, fast, and to have the initiative to ensure that the Ministry is able to deliver in all that it is tasked to do.

All officers must have a sense of ownership and responsibility to ensure that we perform to the best of our ability. We must take pride in our work. If we strive to do what is right and hold certain standards at all times, our quality of work would show for itself. Leadership and management skills have to be cultivated and learned from day one when an officer sets foot in Wisma Putra.

We recognise the importance of developing a pool of subject matter experts in the Ministry but at the same time, we have to strike a balance in ensuring that officers are able to handle the 'bread and butter' issues of Wisma Putra as well as management issues. This is important as all officers have to do both functions when they are posted abroad. Being in Wisma Putra throughout one's career also means that officers are able to continuously and incrementally develop, hone and refine their skills and knowledge as diplomats. This is something that all officers should strive to do in order to excel as diplomats in furthering Malaysia's interests at home and abroad.

*IDFR would like to express its appreciation to Datuk Othman Hashim, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, for agreeing to be featured in the Diplomatic Voice.*



## Speech by Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia during the Opening Ceremony of the 26<sup>th</sup> Asean Summit



Your Majesty,

ASEAN Heads of State and Government,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to welcome all of you to Kuala Lumpur and the opening ceremony of the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit.

Ten years ago, Malaysia filled this hall for the same purpose as today. We are privileged to serve ASEAN once again in a decisive year for our organisation; a year filled with important developments in the areas of community-building, including through deeper economic integration.

2015 will be a milestone in the history of ASEAN. The vision of creating a single community will be realised by the end of December. And it is also our collective duty this year to formulate a successor document to the Roadmap to Establish the ASEAN Community. This will provide the basis for how we further strengthen our unity and deepen our integration over the next ten years, taking us up to 2025. These are two crucial undertakings for charting a bold, inclusive and forward-looking future for ASEAN and its peoples.

So it is appropriate that the theme of Malaysia's chairmanship is *Our*

nity for all people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to talk to you about ASEAN itself. ASEAN is a political and economic organisation, and one that is playing an increasingly important role, both regionally and globally.

But it is also an idea. It is an idea about who we are, as a group of ten nations in Southeast Asia. And it is an idea and a vision that has helped guide more and more of us, as new members joined over time, for 47 years now.

It is particularly personal for me. My father, Tun Razak, was one of the five statesmen who signed the Bangkok Declaration in 1967. It was that document that brought ASEAN into being, and although I was only 15 at the time, I remember being well aware that it represented a momentous change in the way the countries in our region dealt with each other.

The language in that declaration more than stands the test of time. It states, for instance, that:

"In an increasingly interdependent world, the cherished ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and economic well-being are best attained by fostering good understanding, good neighbourliness and meaningful cooperation among the countries of the region", which it says are "already

*People, Our Community, Our Vision. We want to make ASEAN "People Centred". This means good governance, higher standards of living, sustainable development, empowerment of women, and greater opportu-*

bound together by ties of history and culture".

Those inspiring words are as true today as they were then.

We must make sure, however, that those ties that bind – and the great idea that is ASEAN – are a tangible, personal reality for all of our citizens too. There are many, many instances when they already are.

In the ongoing turmoil in Yemen, for example, many Malaysians found themselves trapped on the ground. We had to undertake a dramatic evacuation, transporting our citizens from Aden to Djibouti, and subsequently to Jeddah on a Malaysian army aircraft.

We evacuated our people alongside ASEAN nationals from Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. I am happy to report that all are safe. But more than that, I am gratified that similar exercises were carried out by the other ASEAN Governments as well, each rendering assistance to the other's citizens, as one. That is the spirit of ASEAN.

A People-Centred ASEAN is one in which our citizens feel that they are not just part of ASEAN. But that regardless of who they are – from rice farmers to Forex dealers, halal business owners, fishermen and electronics engineers – our citizens actually feel that they are ASEAN, and its future is their future.

In order to achieve that, we must engage with and constantly listen to them. This is why the Leaders' programme later today will include a series of four interfaces with different segments of society – with youth, with civil society organisations, with business groups and with Parliamentarians.

Throughout the year, Malaysia has put in place more people-centred programmes, including the ASEAN Bu-

business and Investment Summit, the 1ASEAN Entrepreneurship Summit, the ASEAN SME Showcase and Conference and the ASEAN Young Leaders' Summit.

We are also thinking about our next generation of leaders, and have created a new MTCP-ASEAN Masters Scholarship programme to allow students from ASEAN countries to study in well-established Malaysian public universities and thereafter, make significant contributions in their own countries on their return.

We believe that ASEAN should publicly recognise and celebrate those outstanding organisations and individuals who have contributed significantly to the community-building process throughout the years.

With this in mind, I am pleased to announce that later this year, at the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, we will host the inaugural "ASEAN Peoples' Awards" at which we will celebrate the exceptional achievements of those who are honoured.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A People-Centred ASEAN must work for the benefit of our citizens both at home and internationally. Here, the concept of ASEAN Centrality is key. A strong and united ASEAN – that is friendly and believes in cooperative engagement with all countries – provides the framework for the maintenance of regional peace and stability.

There will always be differences – small differences, I hope – between us. That is inevitable in a ten-nation group which rejoices in a multiplicity of ethnicities, cultures and religions. But we are used to living with diversity in Malaysia. And we believe the way to iron out any differences of opinion is amicably, with tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. That is the ASEAN way.

An ASEAN characterised by internal conflicts could never aspire to be a true community. To be a community, we must address internal conflicts within our region. This is why we are working with other countries to build peace. For example, the recent progress on the Bangsamoro peace process has been so important, and we must not pause in our efforts to bring a permanent resolution to a conflict which has led to so much loss of life and displaced hundreds of thousands over the years.

While we continue our engagement and cooperative relationships with countries outside ASEAN, we need to peacefully manage differences closer to home, including overlapping maritime claims, without increasing tensions. Recent developments have raised concerns about the South China Sea – and given the importance of its sea lanes to international trade, it is natural that almost any occurrence there will attract attention. ASEAN must address these developments in a proactive but also in a positive and constructive way.

Respect for international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, must be the basis of the rules of engagement and activities in the South China Sea. As Chairman, Malaysia hopes that we will achieve progress in our efforts towards the early conclusion of a Code of Conduct.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the documents we will adopt at this summit is the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates. It is imperative that we adopt this declaration because even in our region, we are not spared the threat posed by extremism. For example, from the advocates of the so-called "Islamic State".

We know that, sadly, some of our citizens have joined forces with those

in Syria and Iraq to commit atrocities in the name of Islam. They are, of course, tragically misguided, and we wholeheartedly condemn their actions.

But it is not enough to state our rejection of provocations and violence. We know from both our histories and our present times that the spark of extremism can too easily be fanned into flames. Irresponsible, rabble-rousing talk can swiftly lead to the persecution of minorities who have been part of the tapestry of our region for centuries. This, too, we utterly condemn.

We must put forward a positive narrative of moderation, of hope and of peace.

And here in Southeast Asia, we are not short of such narratives. In Malaysia, we number Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians amongst our citizens. We know that these differences need not cause enmity.

The Holy Quran enjoins Muslims, in Surah 109:6, to respect other faiths. "To you, your religion, to me mine." We are also enjoined to be "a community that is moderate, justly balanced" (2:143).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need to find ways for ASEAN to become – and to be seen to become – more politically cohesive. Global investors have long been drawn to India and China. But ASEAN can and should position itself as the "third force" in the region, and more visible unity will help us to do so. One proposal would be if we adopted a common time zone throughout ASEAN. This would be a good symbol of ASEAN unity, and good for business.

Our potential, after all, is huge. We already have the third largest workforce in the world. We have a largely youthful, talented and increasingly

skilled population of over 600 million people. Our burgeoning middle class makes us one of the most potent and dynamic of regions – leading one publication to ask last week if ASEAN was Asia’s “hottest investment”.

International trade has almost tripled in the last ten years, and we are now the fourth largest exporting bloc globally. Our current combined GDP is 2.5 trillion dollars – and that figure is expected to rise to 4 trillion in just five years. The OECD predicts overall annual growth of 5.6 per cent over the next four years, and if current trends continue, ASEAN is set to be the world’s fourth largest economy by 2050.

This is ASEAN’s time. And that is why it is essential that we continue with the measures to establish the ASEAN Economic Community. Removing barriers to trade which goes beyond reducing tariffs. It must also include the elimination of non-tariff barriers, such as overly burdensome regulation that hampers free and fair trade. We must

accelerate programmes to harmonise standards, increasing capital market and financial integration, and promoting the freer movement of goods, services, investments and talents between our countries.

The results of such reforms would be transformative. It has been estimated that if intra-ASEAN trade was boosted from 24 per cent to 40 per cent, the incremental impact on the ASEAN economy could be 2.5 trillion dollars annually. It would result in a further 7 trillion dollars spending on infrastructure.

This potential growth would mean astonishing improvements both to our economies and to the standards of living of our citizens. And those prizes are within our grasp.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The founding fathers, through the Bangkok Declaration, envisioned that ASEAN would be “the collective will of the nations of Southeast Asia to bind

themselves together in friendship and cooperation and, through joint efforts and sacrifices, secure for their peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity.”

Those blessings for all our peoples have never been closer. And it is our belief that a truly People-Centred ASEAN, dedicated to forging a Community in which all recognise our commonality and in which the fruits of success are shared by all, has the opportunity to attain them.

Let me repeat: this is ASEAN’s time. Let us work together to ensure that the Asian Century is also the ASEAN Century.

With that, let me once again extend a warm welcome to all of you, and I look forward to our discussions throughout the next two days.

Thank you.

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## AIIB: Challenging the Neo-Liberal Hegemony of Multilateral Financial Institutions

By Syed Nizamuddin Sayed Khassim

Much has been discussed about the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) from the lenses of balance of power, i.e. China’s Financial Pivot versus (vs.) America’s Pivot to Asia. However, what is rarely discussed (at least not sensationally discussed) is the crumbling hegemony of neo-liberalism within the multilateral global financial system.

Students of economics or policy studies will clearly recall the economic debate that rose after the Great Depression; Keynesian vs. Monetarist/Neoliberalism. While both Keynes and Hayek were contemporaries and dealt with generally the same set of problems, they are at odds with one

another when it comes to macroeconomics. Keynes propounded for greater government expenditure and role in the economy. Hayek, on the other hand, pushed for less intervention by the government in the economy.

The Wall Street Crash in 1929 signalled the beginning of the ten-year Great Depression, caused by the unrestrained market and the unbridled expenditures by the ‘haves’, as depicted in Fitzgerald’s novel, *The Great Gatsby*. For the first few years, the ‘have nots’ suffered from worse to worst. While the distinction between the crème de la crème and the bottom crust of the society had always existed, the disparity became more promi-

nent during the Great Depression. Persistent unemployment sky-rocketed and the money within circulation became scarce. Keynes’ plan was straightforward; to inject money within the circulation to boost the aggregate demand. In essence, if aggregate demand increases, it will automatically increase the level of supply. Higher supply will require a higher number of manpower. This will eventually result in reducing the number of unemployment. Keynes also believed that the market is ‘animal in spirit’, i.e. wild, unpredictable and needs to be tamed by the government. The market seeks for its own interest, while the government has the duty to care for the citizens. The idea was proven to be

hugely popular that it brought Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) to the seat of power. While the US continued with its 'New Deal' which was introduced by FDR, the UK pushed for a 'welfare state' by kicking Churchill out of office and putting Labour in power after the Second World War. Keynesian was the order of the day until the late 50's and 60's. During this time, Hayek's idea was only acceptable among the tycoons and intelligentsia. Hayek retreated to the confines of the University of Chicago; the mecca of neoliberalism.

Hayek's neoliberalism started to gain traction among policy makers and populace in the 1970's, when Keynes' model started to give way to deteriorating economic condition. Both unemployment and inflation were on the rise; creating a situation called stagflation. Keynes' prescription to inject more money into the cycle will cause further inflation. Suddenly, Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* which was published in 1944 became gospel in the 80's. Conservative politicians, particularly Margaret Thatcher was so enamored by Hayek that she was reported to have told her ministers during the first cabinet meeting to 'read Hayek' to understand her policies. In the USA, Reagan rode the stead of Hayek and stormed the White House; reducing government expenditure, reducing taxation, reducing financial regulation and tightening up the money supply. Thatcherism was, in many ways, similar to Reaganomics, with an additional drive to push for the emasculation of unions which Thatcher blamed as the root cause for the United Kingdom's economic decline in its post-war years. The benefits of neoliberalism were too vivid not to be observed; the United Kingdom was on its feet again and Reagan stood towering over the imploding Soviet Union's economy. Even Malaysia was not immune to the charms of neoliberalism. Taking its cue from the United Kingdom, Malaysia embarked on its own large scale privatisation. The administrators took the

back seat and became mere regulators instead of drivers. 'Malaysia Inc' became the policy of the government. Small government became ideal. This period was also marked by the increase of private sector's influence and the decline of the Administrative and Diplomatic Services' (PTDs) influence in the government. The bureaucrats were relegated to the role of regulators.

However, it was not all roses and rainbows for the populace as well. The gap between the rich and the poor became stark. The mere mention of Thatcher's name among the disaffected in the UK will cause torrents of foul and abusive words to gush forth. The middle class became weaker, the number of those disaffected grew larger, while the elites got to reap the economic benefits. The lower strata, based on Hayek's model, will enjoy the 'trickle' of these benefits enjoyed by the rich. The lower your station in life, the lesser you will benefit from the trickle. Yet, little could be done as the middle class has been disenfranchised and disempowered. Take the UK for an extreme example; the labour unions would never be as powerful as it was before Thatcher took them down. In Singapore, the labour unions were emasculated to a point that it was almost indistinguishable from a government's mouthpiece.

One can say that the rapid expansion of neoliberalism was left unchecked. The international economic organisations i.e. the IMF and World Bank became institutionally captured by the neoliberals, despite the fact that both were co-founded by Keynes. Neoliberalism was thus the 'dominant paradigm of' international economic organisations up until the financial meltdown in 2008. The presence of the Japanese-controlled Asian Development Bank (ADB) later on was perceived as an expansion to the neoliberal agenda set by the World Bank and IMF. The ADB is "seen as following the World Bank's lead, much like Tokyo broadly follows Washing-

ton's directions" (Walden Bello, 2015). In essence; nobody could see change coming in from the three major multilateral financial institutions. There was, of course, IMF's announcement a few years back that it will shift towards a more Keynesian approach in its policies. This glim of hope was quickly extinguished by its own action that pushed for severe austerity policies on Greece, Ireland and Portugal after the economic meltdown in 2008.

The three multilateral financial systems had worked to push for governments in the developing countries to opt for privatisation in the 90s, even when privatisation has clearly failed to be implemented successfully within the framework of a developing state. To take an example, Bolivia's government was destabilised when the then-President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada implemented his 'shock therapy' by privatising many public utilities. The climax of this destabilised period was Bolivia's Water War, where rioting ensued when the government took to IMF-World Bank's prescription to 'liberalise the water supply', i.e. privatise the water supply in Cochabamba. Although the then-government expressed regret in following the prescription set out by the IMF-World Bank, all was lost when they were kicked out of power. The IMF-World Bank was also to be blamed for the Asian financial crisis by promoting liberalisation of capital in the first place, before imposing harsh austerity policies during the crisis later on. These institutions were also responsible for orchestrating the imposition of ineffective structural adjustments in the developing countries during the 80's and 90's, particularly in Asia and Africa. Few, if not none, of these initiatives bore fruit – as the institutions were adamant to administer neoliberal prescription of privatisation and free market. Most of the countries however, were left with higher income disparity and political tumult.

Many things have happened since the day FDR struck the New Deal. New era

will usher in a new set of problems. The total ramification of the birth of the AIIB has yet to be seen. Will the developing countries be better off with the deals which will be put forth by AIIB? It is still too early to tell. But I firmly believe that the creation of the AIIB is a good thing. Firstly, it creates a new source for the developing countries to fund the building of infrastructures in their countries. Secondly, it is not dominated by the Western bloc. While many countries have their stakes in the IMF and World Bank, the playing game is not levelled, particularly when it comes to the issue of additional votes on top of the universal voting rights. As of 2009, the USA held 16.4 per cent of the total votes while China at merely 3.8 per cent. And thirdly, there is a dire need to enhance infrastructure investment worldwide, particularly among the developing states. The IMF, World Bank and the ADB were not able to adapt and meet the pressing needs. The steadfastness to the neoliberalism approach mentioned earlier, such as pressuring the countries it helped to liberalise, was

among the key factors why these institutions were not able to let development 'trickle down' as targeted. The creation of AIIB therefore, will be a welcome to the international financial dynamics.

Keynes foresaw that foreign debts will leave a nation vulnerable (Keynes, 1933), this despite he himself being a co-founder of the IMF and World Bank. However, given the limited choices that we have and the global balance of power; joining the AIIB is the lesser of two evils. While AIIB has yet to prove itself, its birth will usher in a new era where neoliberalism will not go unchallenged. Surely with this change and the birth of BRICS' (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) New Development Bank, the developing countries will adjust their respective fiscal policies to fit the deals offered by these institutions.

Nonetheless, the entire argument boils down to this; whatever school of thought the AIIB will espouse, whether it will be New Keynesian (not to be

confused with Neo-Keynesian) or neo-classical – what matters most is that it works. Deng Xiaoping was once famously quoted to have said, "it does not matter if the cat is black or white, as long as it catches the mouse". While apt, one must also remember that not all cats could catch mice. Especially not the one neutered.

*Note: In certain parts of this essay, the IMF and World Bank were used interchangeably due to the concerted roles played by them on certain issues.*



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## Kuala Lumpur Declaration on a People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN

**WE**, the Heads of State/Government of Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 27 April 2015;

**UNDERLINING** the ASEAN Charter as the basis of ASEAN's core principles and values to which we adhere;

**REAFFIRMING** ASEAN's establishment as a platform for common action to promote regional cooperation in Southeast Asia and the need

to further strengthen the existing bonds of regional solidarity and cooperation;

**FURTHER REAFFIRMING** the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration and Nay Pyi Taw Declaration on the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision which reiterate our determination to create a people-oriented, people-centred and rules-based ASEAN, and the Bali Concord III and its Plan of Action (2013-2017), which contribute to efforts thereto;

**RECOGNISING** the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals as well as the upcoming United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda, which places people and the planet at the

centre of a new era of sustainable development;

**MINDFUL** of the progress achieved within the region and the need for managing change and transformation effectively at the regional and global levels as well as the need to confront challenges to promote peace, security and prosperity in Southeast Asia.

### **WE HEREBY AGREE TO:**

Continue establishing a people-oriented, people-centred and rules-based ASEAN Community where all people, stakeholders and sectors of society can contribute to and enjoy the benefits from a more integrated and connected Community encompassing enhanced cooperation in the politi-



cal-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars for sustainable, equitable and inclusive development;

### Political-Security

Continue to promote the principles of democracy, rule of law and good governance, social justice, as well as to promote and protect human rights and respect for fundamental freedoms;

Encourage the ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights and other Sectoral Bodies related to human rights to continue to have meaningful and constructive engagement with relevant stakeholders including accredited civil society organisations in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration;

Further enhance judicial systems and legal infrastructure to maintain a peaceful and harmonious environment, as well as engagement between legislative and executive branches in the process of the establishment of a rules-based ASEAN Community;

Continue to preserve Southeast Asia as a peaceful and prosperous region, free of conflict, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction;

Further promote and strengthen peace-oriented values and reconciliation in ASEAN through inclusive engagement with all relevant stakeholders as well as enhancing and supporting the work of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR);

Continue strengthening good governance and integrity in the public sector in ASEAN Member States;

### Economic

Promote an integrated, stable, prosperous and highly cohesive regional economy which encompasses all sectors of society, as well as encourage

the participation of women, the elderly and youth in building a competitive, innovative and dynamic ASEAN;

Promote the development of Small and Medium Enterprises as a driving force for the ASEAN Economic Community, including providing an enabling environment conducive to their business activities, access to the formal financial system and continue promoting public-private sector partnership;

Encourage more engagement and interaction between ASEAN and business leaders, including Small and Medium Enterprises, support the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan II and its successor documents to narrow the development gaps among ASEAN Member States, as well as facilitate movement of business persons, skilled labour and talents;

Integrate the elements of health, climate change, environment, sustainable utilisation and management of natural resources, proactive disaster risk reduction and management strategies, and harmonious socio-cultural diversity in promoting connectivity, higher productivity, sustaining economic development and building resilience in the region;

Continue capacity building initiatives to enable all ASEAN economies to fully participate in the ongoing integration efforts;

Realise the vision of a competitive, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food, agriculture and forestry sector integrated with the global economy, based on a single-market and production base contributing to food and nutritional security and prosperity in the ASEAN Community;

Raise awareness, promote and develop social business in empowering communities to generate revenue and social returns to improve the well-being and livelihood of our people;

### Socio-Cultural

Strengthen efforts to build a people-oriented, people-centred and socially responsible socio-cultural community with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the ASEAN peoples by instilling a shared appreciation of cultural diversity as well as promoting the well-being and welfare of the peoples;

Promote and protect the rights of women, children, youth and elderly persons as well as those of migrant workers, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, people in vulnerable situations and marginalised groups and promote their interests and welfare in ASEAN's future agenda including through the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision and its attendant documents;

Alleviate poverty and narrow the development gap by increasing access to basic needs and work towards achieving adequate standards of living in line with our global commitment on poverty eradication;

Ensure our people's access to clean water, clean air, basic healthcare and other social services so that they may lead healthy and productive lives and thereby contribute to the ASEAN Community;

Enhance people-to-people contacts and awareness of ASEAN identity among young people by increasing youth interaction and exchanges within ASEAN;

Promote sustainable cities in ASEAN with emphasis on robust economic activities, a safe and healthy living environment, and eco-friendly and sustainable urban infrastructure;

Promote regional resilience by addressing socio-cultural and socio-economic issues that may result from climate change and other environmental impacts, including transboundary environmental pollution, as contained in the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, through the full and effective imple-

mentation of related ASEAN agreements;

Promote enhanced cooperation on disaster management and emergency response to strengthen disaster resilience at all levels and reduce vulnerabilities of affected populations;

Ensure ASEAN's rich biological diversity is conserved and sustainably managed toward enhancing social, economic and environmental well-being;

Enhance cooperation in education by

encouraging regional student exchanges, academic mobility and higher quality of education;

Enhance cooperation among ASEAN Member States to create a high performing, dynamic and people-oriented, people-centred civil service to support a prosperous and resilient ASEAN Community;

#### External Cooperation

Enhance ASEAN cooperation with its dialogue partners and relevant external parties within the framework of

ASEAN-led mechanisms in all three pillars of the ASEAN Community that would complement regional efforts to strengthen a people-oriented, people-centred and rules-based ASEAN.

**WE** are committed to the above aspirations, which shall serve as guiding principles in promoting a people-oriented, people-centred, and rules-based ASEAN.

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of April in the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen.

## Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates

**WE**, the Heads of State/Government of Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Langkawi, Malaysia on 27 April 2015;

**REAFFIRMING** our commitment to the aims and purposes of ASEAN as set forth in the Bangkok Declaration of 8<sup>th</sup> August 1967 and contributing towards peace, progress and prosperity;

**REAFFIRMING** the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter;

**RECALLING** that during the 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 8 May 2011, Leaders welcomed the initiative to establish the Global Movement of Moderates as one of ASEAN's positive contributions in shaping global developments and to global peace and security, and subsequently adopted the ASEAN Concept Paper on Global Movement of Moderates at the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia;

**NOTING** that the Global Movement of Moderates is an initiative which promotes a culture of peace and complements other initiatives, including the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations;

**APPRECIATING** efforts at the community, national, regional and international levels in promoting cohesion of the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural ASEAN community whose diversity is a source of strength to promote moderation;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that moderation, as a means to promote tolerance and mutual understanding, includes the importance of engaging in dialogues on political, economic and socio-cultural issues;

**RECOGNISING** that moderation guides action which emphasises tolerance, understanding, dialogue, mutual respect and inclusiveness and is a tool to bridge differences and resolve disputes;

**FURTHER RECOGNISING** that moderation is an all-encompassing approach not only in resolving differences and conflicts peacefully but also for ensuring sustainable and

inclusive development and equitable growth as well as promoting social harmony and mutual understanding within the country and region;

**FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING** that a commitment to democratic values, good governance, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, equitable and inclusive economic growth, tolerance and mutual respect and adherence to social justice are vital to countering terrorism, violent extremism and radicalism, which pose a challenge to ASEAN, and address their root causes;

**RECOGNISING** that moderation is a core value in the pursuit of long-lasting peace and a tool to diffuse tensions, negate radicalism and counter extremism in all its forms and manifestations;

**MINDFUL** that violent extremism should not be associated with any culture, civilisation or religion;

**EMPHASISING** that terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations should not be tolerated or condoned;

**COMMENDING** efforts and initiatives

towards the sharing of best practices on counter-radicalisation and tackling the root causes of extremism;

**ENCOURAGED** that the Global Movement of Moderates has received widespread support from the international community, academic institutions and civil society organisations;

**DO HEREBY AGREE TO:**

1. Strengthen ASEAN unity and solidarity and its central role in maintaining and promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region;
2. Enhance ASEAN's common agenda for peace and prosperity, which promotes political and social stability, inclusive political processes; sustainable growth which provides opportunities for all and upholds dignity; and social justice with emphasis on mutual respect, balance and moderation;
3. Promote moderation as an ASEAN value that promotes peace, security and development;
4. Further promote the approach of moderation and uphold the rule of law in the conduct of relations among states, including in the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law;
5. Enhance cooperation within various ASEAN-led mechanisms aiming to drown out the voices of extremism;

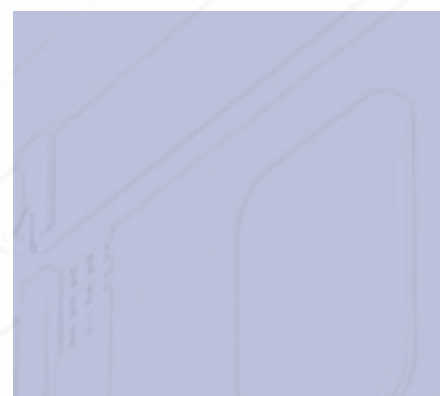
6. Conduct activities which further promote moderation, including but not limited to the following:

- i. Organise outreach programmes, interfaith and cross-cultural dialogues in various formats at the national, regional and international levels, including through the convening of the Second International Conference on the Global Movement of Moderates, to be hosted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2015, and the Bali Democracy Forum in Indonesia;
- ii. Continue to build on initiatives to share best practices on counter-radicalisation and tackle the roots of extremism such as the East Asia Summit Symposium on Religious Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration held in Singapore in April 2015;
- iii. Encourage more enhanced information-sharing on best practices on moderation among ASEAN Member States, including through the ASEAN Secretariat;
- iv. Provide the space, support and mechanisms to cultivate emerging leadership from various stakeholders, including women and youth that can help enhance ASEAN innovativeness and vitality to effectively address emerging global challenges including the rise of violent extremism;
- v. Encourage the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation and the ASEAN Foundation to conduct seminars, workshops and training programmes in collaboration with the Global

Movement of Moderates Foundation, among others in promoting the voices of moderation;

- vi. Promote education as an effective means of instilling respect for life, for diversity and the values of moderation, tolerance, non-violence and mutual understanding towards preventing the spread of violent extremism and addressing its root causes;
- vii. Encourage academic discourse and exchanges to amplify voices of moderates;
- viii. Collaborate with dialogue partners, international organisations and other relevant stakeholders to conduct seminars and workshops for the sharing of best practices and successful case studies of engagement and integration policies that support the promotion of moderation; and
- ix. Promote the observance of a Year of Moderation at the United Nations to underscore the importance of moderation.

Adopted in Langkawi, Malaysia on the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of April in the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen.



## Declaration on Institutionalising the Resilience of ASEAN and its Communities and Peoples to Disasters and Climate Change

**WE**, the Heads of States/Governments of the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (hereinafter referred to as "ASEAN"), namely Brunei Darus-

salam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao

People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on the occasion of the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 27 April 2015;

**RECALLING** the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II of 7 October 2003, which seeks to build an ASEAN Community, comprising of three mutually reinforcing and closely intertwined pillars, namely political-security community, economic community, and socio-cultural community;

**RECALLING FURTHER** the provisions of the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II which seeks to consolidate and enhance the achievements of ASEAN as a dynamic, resilient and cohesive regional association and, through the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, to intensify cooperation in addressing problems associated with population growth, environmental degradation, transboundary pollution and disaster management in the region to enable individual Member States to fully realise their development potentials;

**REAFFIRMING** the spirit of the ASEAN Charter, which aims to accelerate the establishment of the ASEAN Community by 2015, as agreed in Cebu, Philippines in 2007;

**NOTING** with satisfaction the accomplishments made in implementing the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community (2009-2015), which aims to, inter alia, build disaster resilient nations and safer communities and ensure environmental sustainability;

**CONSCIOUS** of the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision and its attendant documents that further empowers peoples and institutions to become fully responsive, adaptive and prepared to address challenges of natural and human-induced disasters, impacts of climate change, and other economic and social shocks, to

reduce poverty, vulnerabilities, and exposure to risks;

**EMPHASISING** our commitments to the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, ASEAN Climate Change Initiative, ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Change, ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability as well as agreements, action plans and work programmes of relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies;

**MINDFUL** of our commitments to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the outcome of the UN Climate Change Conference, which may result to a new international climate change treaty by 2015, the outcome of United Nations Summit on the post-2015 development agenda, notably a set of Sustainable Development Goals, and other related international instruments that ASEAN Member States are parties to, and of our pledge to play an active and responsible role on both the regional and international stage as we strive to attain the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision and its attendant documents and make tomorrow's world a safer place;

**RECOGNISING** that exposure of ASEAN's peoples and communities to various natural hazards is rapidly rising, vulnerability to extreme weather events and climate change is spiraling, and this "new normal" leads to growing frequency and severity of disasters, exacting a tremendous toll on economic, social, cultural, physical, and environmental capital of countries and communities, which in turn stifles our region's sustainable development including our efforts towards poverty eradication;

**REALISING** the urgent need to enhance awareness among Member States and all ASEAN sectoral bodies and stakeholders to be able to simultaneously address the interlocking issues of disaster risk reduction,

climate change adaptation and sustainable development and to effectively reduce adverse impacts of natural and human-induced disasters and climate change on key development sectors;

**EMPHASISING** the imperative to promote development that is transformative, inclusive, adaptive and sustainable, where peoples and communities thrive in peace and prosperity as envisioned in the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision and its attendant documents and to build an ASEAN Community that is resilient to disasters and climate change, viewing resilience as a unifying but multifaceted process and outcome;

#### **DO HEREBY:**

- i. Commit to forge a more resilient future by reducing existing disaster and climate-related risks, preventing the generation of new risks and adapting to a changing climate through the implementation of economic, social, cultural, physical, and environmental measures which address exposure and vulnerability, and thus strengthen resilience;
- ii. Underline the importance of producing coherence, consistency and alignment across the pillars and relevant sectors of ASEAN by systematically mainstreaming disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in relevant sectoral policies, strategies, plans, programmes, and projects as well as the need for cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaboration on disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and sustainable development and related cross-cutting concerns;
- iii. Further institutionalise disaster risk management and climate change adaptation at the national and local levels by harmonising these with existing and new policy and legal frameworks,

- national development strategies and plans, and sectoral programmes and projects;
- iv. Encourage all stakeholders to participate in planning and implementation of the institutionalisation of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation at the local, national and regional levels and monitor the progress and outcomes in terms of reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change through multi-stakeholder means and mechanisms;
  - v. Accelerate investments in disaster risk prevention and reduction and climate change adaptation through cohesive and integrated structural and non-structural measures to enhance economic, social, physical and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries and their assets as well as the environment, focusing on key development sectors such as health, water management, ecosystems management, economic planning, agriculture, cultural heritage, education, infrastructure and construction, transport and telecommunication, and risk financing and risk transfer, in both public and private sectors and civil society, as these integrated interventions are more cost-effective than traditional reliance on post-disaster response and recovery, and thus also contribute to the sustainability of development;
  - vi. Address underlying risk drivers and compounding factors, such as climate change and climate variability, uncontrolled urbanisation, ecosystem degradation, weak governance, limited risk management capacity especially at the local scale, poor management of urban and rural development, consequences of poverty and inequality, and conflict situations;
  - vii. Foster the understanding of risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity and exposure as well as the hazard and climate change context to ensure that policies, plans and priorities for intervention are based on evidence and credible assessment of risk and climate change impact scenarios at the local, national and regional levels, taking into account the range of costs and benefits of effective risk management and adaptation for the most vulnerable groups;
  - viii. Continue sharing and dissemination of risk and climate information to support on going and future efforts on research and development in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation and widen the accessibility of users and stakeholders to such risk and climate information and knowledge to further support risk-informed policy development, decision-making and investment programming in both public and private sectors;
  - ix. Strengthen the capacities of national and regional institutions to monitor and reduce risk as well as enhance their adaptive capacities through the promotion of education on climate change and disaster risk management and exchange of innovative practices and learning experiences, among others;
  - x. Allocate resources to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response and effectively support resilient recovery and rehabilitation, whether for extensive, small-scale and repeated shocks or disturbances or intensive, large-scale catastrophic disasters, harnessing both ex-ante and ex-post financing measures, as well as to institutionalise pre-disaster recovery planning and adaptation programming at all scales to bounce forward and recover in a timely and efficient manner;
  - xi. Agree to enhance cooperation and collaboration among ASEAN Member States to support the implementation of this Declaration and develop a cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaborative ASEAN work programme for resilience building in the context of disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and sustainable development; and
  - xii. Assign the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) as the focal point for cross-sectoral cooperation on resilience building at regional level, with the support of other relevant sectoral bodies.

Adopted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of April in the Year Two Thousand and Fifteen.



# The 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit





# 26th ASEAN SUMMIT PRESS CONFERENCE

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 26-27 April 2015



## ASEAN Ambassador Lecture Series 1/2015



## ASEAN Ambassador Lecture Series 2/2015







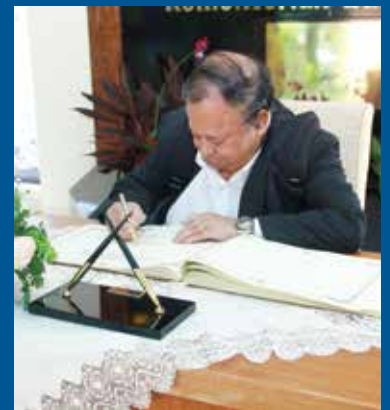
# ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Forum



# IDFR Lecture Series 2/2015



IDFR Lecture Series 3/2015

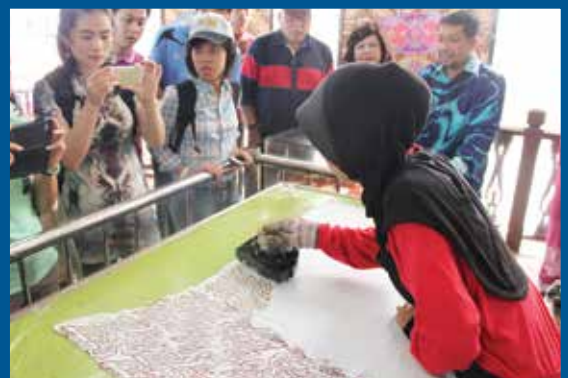


Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2015 Programme





# Training Courses



## ASEAN Ambassador Lecture Series 1/2015

On 7 May 2015, IDFR organised a panel discussion titled *Malaysia-Indonesia Relations under the Jokowi Administration and Its Impact for the Region*. The panel consisted of Mr. Shahrizan Lockman, Senior Analyst at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia as the moderator, His Excellency (H.E.) Air Chief Marshal (Ret.) Herman Prayitno, Ambassador of Indonesia to Malaysia; Associate Professor Dr. Farish A. Noor, Senior Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; and Mr. Zamruni Khalid, Deputy Director General, ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia.

The session commenced with welcoming remarks delivered by Dato' Hussin Nayan, Director General of IDFR who spoke about Malaysia's keenness to learn and understand what President Jokowi's presidency holds for Malaysia and the region.

Mr. Shahrizan Lockman set the tone of the discussion by indicating that Indonesia takes bilateral relation with Malaysia very seriously and this was especially evident when President Jokowi visited Malaysia thrice after taking office. He also mentioned that Malaysia and Indonesia are in need of each other despite experiencing contentions and some ups and downs in the past.

H.E. Prayitno pointed out that *Nawa Cita*, which is the Nine Priorities

Agenda as envisioned by President Jokowi, has a significant impact to Malaysia-Indonesia relations and ASEAN as a whole. In H.E. Prayitno's presentation, the projection of *Nawa Cita* reflects the commitment of Indonesia to the international community especially the ASEAN region. H.E. Prayitno opined that there are many layers of cooperation to be strengthened and the cultivation of spirit of togetherness is one of them which is vital to maintain the bond between member states at the lowest level. H.E. Prayitno further emphasised the Indonesian administration's commitment towards the realisation of the ASEAN Community which aims to develop economic growth, maintain the stability of politics and security, and celebrate the diversity of culture in the region.

Associate Professor Dr. Farish A. Noor, the second panellist, deconstructed the notion of ASEAN integration and explained how it had impacted the relations between Malaysia and Indonesia in the past. He further highlighted the historical legacy between these two countries; despite some misunderstandings prior to this, the rapprochement has never been better, thus indicating Malaysia-Indonesia commitment towards each other. He also stressed the importance of ASEAN Identity to be inculcated especially among the youths as they are going to be the driver of the region in the future.

The final speaker, Mr. Zamruni Khalid



delved further into the discussion by explaining about the linkage between Malaysia as ASEAN Chairman 2015 vis-à-vis Indonesia relations. He also discussed in brief about the recent 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and further expressed Malaysia's pledge to navigate ASEAN along with the support of its member states especially Indonesia.

Questions from the floor included on development of ASEAN identity and its norms, economic and migrant worker issues, and the recent violation of an MoU by the Indonesian authority when they sunk Malaysian vessels found in the Indonesian waters. In that regard, H.E. Prayitno guaranteed Indonesia's commitment to Malaysia and its willingness to resolve and provide assistance in maintaining a strong and viable relation with Malaysia and ASEAN as a whole.

The panel discussion was attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, senior members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from think tanks and NGOs, academicians, students from institutions of higher learning and members of the media.

## ASEAN Ambassador Lecture Series 2/2015

On 27 May 2015, IDFR organised its second ASEAN Ambassador Lecture Series, which featured His Excellency Vanu Gopala Menon, High Commissioner of Singapore to Malaysia, who spoke on *ASEAN Regional Architecture*. The session was moderated by Professor Dr. K.S Nathan, IDFR's

Distinguished Fellow. The objective of this session was to discuss ASEAN at the centre of efforts to create a regional architecture that maintains peace and stability in the region and contributes to its economic growth as well as to provide views and insights on how ASEAN engages with the major

powers and creates a conducive environment for them to interact with ASEAN and with each other.

H.E. Menon mentioned that ASEAN has evolved and puts more focus on economic growth and social progress in order to improve the living condi-

tions of its people. ASEAN has also transformed into a peaceful region with large and important markets with significant opportunities. H.E. Menon divided the success of ASEAN into three parts. First, the initial founding five of ASEAN realised the importance of staying united amidst economic and security turbulence. Second, ASEAN was privileged to have leaders who were wise, visionary and pragmatic and saw the importance of coming together as one. Lastly, the fact that most of us in ASEAN are maritime nations and we have always had the presence of seafarers since ancient times trading with us. ASEAN has always practised openness and should continue doing so in the present time if we want to succeed as an ASEAN Economic Community.

Despite the success, ASEAN should always remain vigilant towards new challenges that arise. ASEAN member states should not only develop themselves but also deepen regional integration and strengthen the regional

architecture through which we all engage and interact with our dialogue partners.

Professor Dr. K.S. Nathan, who was also a discussant at this event, responded to H.E. Menon's presentation and presented a paper titled *ASEAN and the Regional Security Architecture: Current Geopolitical Realities, Challenges and Prospects – A Malaysian Perspective*. Dr. Nathan began his presentation by looking at some of the major regional powers and its strategic implications towards the region and concluded by saying that diversity in ASEAN is the key pillar of regional architecture.

This session was complemented by active participation from the participants with questions and comments. Among other issues that were raised were the Rohingyas and people-centred ASEAN as many ASEAN citizens are still not aware of the concept of ASEAN. In this regard, member states need to ensure that

people on the ground understand the fundamentals and its importance and the possibility of conducting a joint exercise with other ASEAN partners beside China on the best practices on maritime security at the border. Religion is one of the factor that could be used as a tool to unite the people in ASEAN. The development of the pillars in ASEAN community such as ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community should be moved at the same pace.



## ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Forum



On 21 May 2015, IDFR, in collaboration with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and ASEAN University Network (ANU), organised an ASEAN Economic Community Forum with the theme *Fostering University-Industry Partnerships for Building the AEC*.

The event commenced with welcoming remarks by Ambassador Aminah Hj. A. Karim, Deputy Director General of IDFR. She stated that the conclusion of AEC which

entails opportunities to stimulate economic growth and ensure prosperity in the region can benefit the academicians as well as young entrepreneurs. This was followed by welcoming remarks by Professor Dr. Imran Ho Abdullah, Deputy Vice Chancellor of UKM who said that the forum can be regarded as a platform to create public awareness among ASEAN citizens and a driver for UKM to be the leading ASEAN University in Malaysia.

Dr. Cholthis Dhirathiti, Deputy Executive Director of ANU, in his opening remarks pointed out that this collaboration was imperative because it can promote the opportunity to exchange

and advance ideas among ASEAN stakeholders and hoped that the engagement will inculcate esprit de corps towards regional mindset among the relevant stakeholders.

Five panel discussions were conducted over a period of two days. The first panel discussion titled *Towards a Single Market and Production Base* was moderated by Professor Dr. Tham Siew Yean, Deputy Director, Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) of UKM. The distinguished panellists for the session were Associate Professor Dr. Evelyn Shyamala Devadason from the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya and Professor Dr. Paitoon Wiboonchutikula from the Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

The first panel discussion sought to address the issue of free flow of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labour among ASEAN members based on policy changes, publicly available indicators and anecdotal evidence in order to reflect the future of a single market and production base in ASEAN and to identify its opportunities and challenges.

The second panel discussion titled *A Competitive and Equitable Economic Region* covered the second and third pillars of the AEC Blueprint. The moderator of the session was Professor Dr. Rokiah Alavi from the Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. The panellists comprised Dr. Sothea Oum from Adelaide Education Centre and the Centre for International Economic Studies, University of Adelaide; Associate Professor Dr. Phouphet Kyophilavong from the Faculty of Economics and Business Management, National University of Lao, Laos; Dr. Maxensius Sambodo, Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore; Ms. Moe Thuzar, Lead Researcher in Socio-Cultural Affairs, ISEAS and Dr. Nguyen Anh Thu, Vice Rector of the VNU University of Economics and Business, Vietnam.

The panel discussion identified several policies that can be implemented in order to make ASEAN a competitive and equitable economic region and discussed issues revolving reforms of institutions in ASEAN specifically on competition policy, structural and regulatory reforms, and policies catering to small and medium enterprises, infrastructure development and socio-economic programmes.

The third panel discussion was on *Fostering University-Industry Partnerships for Building the AEC*. The session was moderated by Associate Professor Dr. Evelyn Shyamala Devadason. and the panellists were Mr. Peter McKenna, Managing Director of Venturenauts Australia and Associate

Professor Michael Ewing-Chow, Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.

The discussion included the issue of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). RCEP is a proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the ten ASEAN member states and the six states with which ASEAN has existing FTAs (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand). The negotiating group of RCEP includes goods, services, investment, IPR, Competition, Legal and Institutions, Economic and Technical Cooperation, ROO, STRACAP (Standards), Customs and SPS. RCEP can be a consolidation and harmonisation opportunity for the region. However, since 16 countries are involved in the negotiation, some ambitious commitments may be hard to obtain. RCEP participating countries are also TPP members and could undermine the essentiality of RCEP in this regard.

The fourth session discussed *Enhancing University-Industry Research Collaborations on AEC Issues for Greater Policy Relevance: How do We Move Forward?* The moderator was Professor Dr. Rashila Ramli, Director and Principal Fellow of IKMAS, and the panellists were Madam Wan Suraya Wan Md Radzi, Senior Director of the Investment Policy and Trade Facilitation Division, MITI Malaysia and Ms. Eleanor Mak, Managing Director of Venturenauts Australia.

The importance of having partnerships between Industries and the academia in research collaborations in the AEC are of tremendous benefits such as creating a single market and production base, a competitive economic region, an equitable economic development and a fully integrated region. However, ASEAN continues to face many challenges. As such, the government has undertaken numerous initiatives to equip Malaysian graduates with skills for high-income career paths. One such initiative

highlighted was the Industry Skills Committee (JKI). The JKI is a collaboration between ministries and agencies, regulatory bodies, business chambers and industry associations. The collaboration will support the AEC and Post AEC 2015, through talent development, innovative products and services, maximising opportunities in ASEAN and Greenfield markets, as well as creating jobs in every ASEAN member state.

The final panel discussion was a *Special Panel: High Level Dialogue on AEC Beyond 2015*. The moderator was Associate Professor Dr. Sufian Jusoh, Senior Fellow of IKMAS, and the panellists were Datuk Ravindran Palaniappan, Senior Director, ASEAN Economic Cooperation Division, MITI Malaysia and Ambassador Dato' Muhamad Noor Yacob, Chairman, Malaysia Automotive Institute.

The panellists looked at the establishment of the AEC from the practitioners' point of view. Political will is imperative in ensuring that the challenges facing ASEAN could be surmounted. These challenges include slower growth rate in China and slow recovery in the Eurozone. In view of these challenges, there is a pressing need for ASEAN to be kept dynamic by way of accelerating economic integration. Development gaps among ASEAN countries need to be addressed by harmonising domestic regulations considering that ASEAN has yet to achieve a single integrated market where there is complete free flow. Additionally, there are complex non-trade barriers (NTBs) that further impede integration.

The panel also compared the establishment of the AEC to the Eurozone and the European Union (EU). Moving forward in terms of economic integration, although there is better allocation of resources, international tensions crop up due to a loss of sovereignty, especially in terms of fiscal policy. Due to the pooling of sovereignty, contribution to the EU budget then

becomes a constant issue and a sticking point. Therefore, in the case of ASEAN, it is important to suit policies according to each individual country's situation, and not adopt a

common fiscal policy, as implemented by the EU. The panel discussion concluded that ASEAN as a concept does not happen overnight, as it takes time to be nurtured and implanted into

the minds of ASEAN citizens.

## IDFR Lecture Series 2/2015

On 15 April 2015, IDFR organised a panel discussion titled *Malaysia's Role and Agenda in the UN Security Council (UNSC)*. The panel consisted of Tan Sri Razali Ismail, Chairman of the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation (GMMF) as moderator, Ms. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Malaysia as the first speaker followed by Dr. Maszlee Malik, Assistant Professor, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and Ms. Zanariah Zainal Abidin, Undersecretary of the Multilateral Political Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia.

Puan Hajah Norani Ibrahim, IDFR's Director of Special Projects, delivered the welcoming remarks. She highlighted the two-pronged challenges faced by Malaysia in the international arena this year, firstly, as Chairmanship of ASEAN and secondly, as a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council for the next two years. She reiterated Malaysia's strength in peacekeeping missions and its focus and commitment towards peace mediation as tools to foster international peace and security.

Tan Sri Razali Ismail kick-started the session by explaining briefly about Malaysia's history and position in the UNSC. Tan Sri also reminded the audience that Malaysia's foreign policy is now in the interest of a larger world populace and no longer only championing the cause of specific groups. He believes Malaysia's promotion of the moderation concept, if adopted whole-heartedly by members, could

lead to a stronger and more resilient UNSC in facing and mediating conflicts.

Ms. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough pointed out that Malaysia's win by an overwhelming majority reflected the world's confidence in Malaysia. Malaysia's five priorities at the UNSC are advancing moderation globally, advocating mediation as an approach to conflict resolution, promoting UN peacekeeping operations, facilitating the peace-building process in strife-torn countries and pursuing deliberations on the UNSC's comprehensive reformation reflected by Malaysia's commitment towards its duties and responsibilities in the UNSC. She agreed to the moderator's call that Malaysia's moderation strategy may be the right ingredient to formulating effective solutions to resolve or even bring conflicts to an end.

Dr. Maszlee, the second speaker, highlighted issues from the perspective of civil societies. He advocated the engagement with civil societies, as an important stakeholder, to be equally vital for Malaysia's experience at the UNSC and stressed that Malaysia has to look into promoting international peace and human rights, both internationally and domestically. Consultation-based approach would benefit Malaysia where civil societies can stimulate active debate and provide recommendations on broader and specific issues for the government to consider.



The final speaker, Ms. Zanariah Zainal Abidin, delved further into the discussion by pointing out Malaysia's commitment within the UNSC. With an image as a moderate Muslim country pushing for an agenda of moderation, Malaysia will have to address issues in an objective manner, and help ensure the council remains united so as to be able to carry out its core function of maintaining international peace and security. She also highlighted Malaysia's previous efforts at mediating, peacekeeping and peacemaking, and affirmed Malaysia's pledge to continue these efforts with greater zeal while developing better and more efficient coordination for peace building cooperation in the UNSC.

Questions from the floor included on UNSC's commitment towards peacebuilding, the roles NGOs can play and the UNSC's ability for quick decision-making on serious issues impacting human security such as the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen where a shortage of food and increased poverty have been brought

about by conflict. It was also suggested that the UNSC should not be addressed as a separate body within the UN as it is key in integrating and coordinating efforts within the UN which has the primary responsibility to drive priority issues. In this regard, Malaysia sees moderation as the most effective tool in achieving peace and will continue to promote moderation in the UNSC as its principles can be applied to any individual or community irrespective of race, colour, religion or

creed. Generally, the discussion was enriching and productive as views and thoughts were shared from various perspectives.

The media, led by RTM, held a brief on-the-spot interview with Tan Sri Razali and Dr. Maszlee to seek their insights on the challenges and prospects faced by Malaysia in the UNSC.

The panel discussion was attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, senior members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from think tanks and NGOs, academicians, students from institutions of higher learning and members of the media.

## IDFR Lecture Series 3/2015

On 11 June 2015, IDFR organised a round table discussion titled *China's One Belt, One Road Initiative: Strategic Implications, Regional Responses*. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road – collectively called *One Belt, One Road* – represent an initiative of unprecedented ambition and proportions. The Silk Road Economic Belt envisages a series of transcontinental links between China and Europe via Central, South and West Asia. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road, on the other hand, is aimed at connecting the economies of East Asia and Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in one route and the South Pacific in the other. This round table discussion aims to explore the implications of the *One Belt, One Road* initiative for the Asian strategic environment and at the same time, discuss what China's concerns are and how it intends to realise this grand initiative.

The panel discussants were Associate Professor Dr. Farish A. Noor, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and IDFR's Distinguished Fellow; Mr. Shahrman Lockman, Senior Analyst, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, and Associate Professor Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain, Department of Political Science, International Islamic



University Malaysia. Dr. Ngeow Chow Bing, Deputy Director and Senior Lecturer, Institute of China Studies, Universiti of Malaya was the moderator.

Dato' Hussin Nayan, the Director General of IDFR, in his welcoming remarks expressed that Malaysia and China have enjoyed strong ties especially since the elevation of the bilateral relations mechanism from trade agreement to comprehensive agreement in October 2013. Therefore, there are many areas to be mutually explored and benefited between both countries from the initiative. In this connection, Malaysia must be ready to engage more actively with China as 'all roads now lead to Beijing', as all roads have led to Rome in the past.

Dr. Ngeow started the session by stating that China's *One Belt, One Road* initiative has fascinated many

countries, including South Korea, which is very enthusiastic to be included in the initiative. Therefore, Malaysia must realise the significance of the project and embark on the possibilities of repositioning to optimise the impact and benefit of the initiative to the country. The United States (US) has also repositioned its thought and direction on China, as it is inevitable to note that the pressure is now derived from the East. China will not merely be observed as an East Asian power but a Eurasian power as it will soon be setting and offering its own rule, vision, framework and structure. The Sino-Centric alternative will be a worldwide drive that will redefine the global and regional situation.

Dr. Farish A. Noor argues that Asia is now at a juncture in the recreation of global human history where Asia can redefine its position as well as its political terrain and structure in the



spirit of coexistence. Citing a book by Kirti N. Chaudhuri titled *Asia before Europe*, he said history has shown that Asia has been a stable continent in the past 2,000 years that stand and support each other hand-in-hand in mutual interaction and dependability. The interest on trading and economy has always been primarily interactive in the past and current times. Dr. Farish also advocates ASEAN countries to maintain its pragmatic realism approach towards China and urges for continuous dialogue and engagement with China.

Mr. Shahrman Lockman pointed out that the economic initiative, specifically the Maritime Silk Road Initiative, mooted by China has reshaped the economic geography in Asia. He explained the underpinnings of the *One Belt, One Road* initiative to be open, flexible and long term, and he further streamlined three main drives behind Malaysia's response to this initiative; the interest of Malaysia, ASEAN inter-relations realm and the refusal of any major power to dominate the project. In addition, Malaysia

also stands to benefit economically from the *One Belt, One Road* initiative.

The final speaker, Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain, continued the discussion by stating that China possesses an advantage over the United States; China does not interfere in any domestic affairs. The new realism championed by China focuses on economic development and attempts to empower its cultural hegemony, mostly on the importance of Mandarin as one of the world's most spoken language. At this juncture, the initiative is positive for Asia to reshape the world with a new understanding towards a fresh and new world order.

During the question and answer session, a question was raised on how China is dealing with the Islamic world, especially as China is now expanding its economic realism to the Middle-Eastern countries. Dr. Farish responded by saying that with China becoming a major power in economy, it will require and consume more energy (oil and gas). Therefore, China needs to engage and instigate a mutual relationship with Middle-East-

ern countries so it can get the supply in a peaceful way.

Another issue raised was the Kra Canal project, an idea of building a canal through the Kra Isthmus, Thailand that can allow ships to bypass Singapore's ports and the Straits of Malacca. The panel agreed that the project cannot be materialised due to a Government-to-Government agreement as it will become a threat to the economic survival of countries in the Malacca Straits. The building of the canal will only save one and a half days of movement for the ships but more importantly, it will have an impact on the geopolitical framework of the region.

The forum was attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies, member of the diplomatic corps and media as well as representative from think-tanks, private sectors, and public and private universities.

## *Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) 2015* Opening Ceremony



IDFR is currently organising the DiD 2015 programme from 5 May to 13 November 2015. It is a six-month mandatory programme for junior Malaysian diplomats and is designed to equip the junior diplomats with knowledge and skills in the practice of diplomacy and international relations. Upon successfully completing the

Deputy Director General, Ambassador Zainol Rahim Zainuddin, Director General, Department of Strategic Planning and Implementation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Riedzal Malik, Principal Assistant Secretary, Human Resource Division of the Ministry, officials from IDFR, and the DiD Secretariat, as well as the DiD participants.

programme, the participants will be conferred the Diploma in Diplomacy.

The opening ceremony for the programme was held at the Treaty Room, on Tuesday, 5 May 2015. In attendance was Ambassador Aminah Hajji A Karim, IDFR's

Ambassador Aminah Hajji A Karim, in her opening remarks, expressed her hopes that the participants would actively participate in all the modules and gain the most benefits from the distinguished invited speakers. Subsequently, Ambassador Zainol, in his remarks, also highlighted the importance of the DiD programme in providing a solid foundation in the required knowledge and skills prior to the participants being posted abroad.

The ceremony was concluded with the pledge and signing of *Aku Janji* by the participants, led by Mr. Mohd Hail Anif Mohd Fauzi.

## *Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses under Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia di Luar Negara (SPKM)*



Four series of *Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses under Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia di Luar Negara (SPKM)* were conducted from January to June 2015.

The programme received 186 participants from 15 ministries, agencies and

new modules, namely, *Religious, Cultural and Consular Matters Related to Deaths Abroad and Human Trafficking*. The modules were added to cater for the more recent challenges in the work at Malaysia's Diplomatic Missions. This improvement received favourable feedback from the participants as they felt the need to be

departments under SPKM, from which 116 were at grade 41 and above and 70 were at grade 38 and below.

The course maintained similar modules as in 2014, with additional two

prepared and cautious for any eventualities. The modules exposed the participants to various aspects related to managing deaths abroad, as well as crime related to human trafficking.

The response from the participants were positive and encouraging. Many of them had indicated that the new knowledge and information gained from the course would be very beneficial for their posting abroad. The overall evaluation of the programme in terms of the Institute's facilities, achievement of the course objectives, effectiveness of the modules and their delivery, management of the course and the secretariat was rated at 6.5, which is between very good to excellent. This reflected the effectiveness of the programme.

## *MTCP: Workshop on Diplomacy and Security for ASEAN Mid-Level Career Diplomats*

IDFR, through the Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) organised a two-week *Workshop on Diplomacy and Security for ASEAN Mid-Level Career Diplomats* from 8 to 21 April 2015. Fourteen participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam took part in this workshop.

The programme aimed to provide mid-career government officials with insights into ASEAN's foreign policy approaches relating to the shifting environment and changing geopolitical realities. It was also to equip them with the experience and knowledge needed to engage and respond constructively and effectively to the emerging global challenges. During the two-week programme, the participants participated in several substantive sessions including on *The Introduction to Malaysia's Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Media Relations, International Relief Efforts and Managing*

*Humanitarian Crisis, Understanding Terrorism and CBRNE Threat, ASEAN-Regional Integration, International Negotiations, Multilateral Diplomacy on Economic and Environmental Issues, Diplomacy in Crisis Management and Human Rights and Diplomacy*.

During their stay in Kuala Lumpur, the participants were also introduced to Malaysia's federal government administration by visiting Putrajaya. Apart from that, the participants were also introduced to the history and culture of Malaysia through visits to historical landmarks of Kuala Lumpur including the National Palace, Batu Caves, National Monu-

ment, National Mosque and Independence Square.

Another highlight of the course was a four-day visit to the state of Terengganu with the aim of providing understanding on the roles and responsibilities of Federal and State Governments in developing the nation. During their stay in Terengganu, the participants visited Redang Island, Islamic Heritage Centre, Terengganu Museum



and Noor Arfa Batik Craft Complex and received a hands-on briefing on the state's political, economic, social, development, environment, historical and cultural aspects.

The participants agreed that the

course was able to meet its objectives and should be continued for future ASEAN mid-level career diplomats. The programme was one of the effective tools in enhancing cooperation among ASEAN diplomats as well as deepening the appreciation and

understanding of ASEAN Member States.

## *MTCP: English Language Course for Diplomacy 2015*

The *MTCP: English Language Course for Diplomacy 2015* was conducted from 20 May to 2 June 2015. The main objectives of the course were to enhance the participants' general English language proficiency and to improve their use of English specifically in the field of diplomacy and international relations. The main focus was to improve the English proficiency level by incorporating topics that are skill-based, for instance; listening and speaking, presentation and public speaking, speech drafting, and language of negotiation and socialising.

As part of the programme, the participants went on several study visits to

places including the Malaysia Tourism Centre, Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation, Putrajaya followed by a three-day visit to the historical city of Melaka to have an in-depth overview of the Malaysian culture. Another highlight of the programme was the *My World Your World* exhibition; where participants had the opportunity to promote their country through an interactive exhibition. This event was a social platform for them to exchange ideas, build network and have a better understanding of other countries.



The participants of the course were from Cambodia, Georgia, Morocco, Fiji, Laos, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Mauritius, Paraguay, Togo, Bhutan, Nigeria, Gambia, Sudan, Kurdistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Guinea, Mauritania and Malaysia.

## *Workshop on Communicating Across Cultures*

A *Workshop on Communicating Across Cultures* was conducted from 9 to 11 June 2015. The objectives of the three-day workshop were to develop the participants' understanding of the concepts of communicating across cultures, identify ways in which cultures affect the communication process and appreciate cultural diversity. The workshop was conducted by Mr. Brian Cracknell, a guest lecturer from Language Works. Participants actively participated in every task given to them through pair or group work and the critical incidents methodology was used as a way of highlighting and understanding how to try to bridge gaps between cultures.



The workshop managed to develop the participants' critical awareness of the process of communication across cultures and between different cultural groups. The workshop was attended by officers from the Ministry of Educa-

tion, National Sports Institute, Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Tourism Malaysia, Malaysia National News Agency, and AlHijrah Digital TV Broadcasting Centre.

## Effective Writing Skills 1/2015

*Effective Writing Skills Course 1/2015* was conducted from 5 May to 9 May 2015. This course aimed to assist participants in writing competently and accurately, using their ability to draft, write and edit their writing and the writing of others.

Throughout the course, the participants learnt the craft of writing

through interactive lectures, in-group discussions and presentations. The participants presented their writing piece at the end of the course and together with the facilitator, did an error analysis exercise. This course helped them to enhance their writing skills in English and gain valuable insight into fragments, paragraphing, proofreading, parts of speech, and

sentence clarity.

The participants were from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resources, Prime Minister's Department, Public Works Department, Department of Town and Country Planning, and Malaysian National News Agency.

## Building Blocks of Good English

The *Building Blocks of Good English* course was held from 13 to 17 April 2015. The course aimed to develop participants' fluency and accuracy in the use of the correct grammar of English in professional and social context. The participants were given an exposure to the grammatical aspects of the English language, among others, on tenses, parts of speech, and sentence patterns and

questions types. The interactive method of group discussions and presentations were used to review and clarify problematic areas on some common mistakes in grammar and ungrammatical structures of English, in both oral and written practice. By the end of the five-day course, the participants were able to identify some grammatical errors in their writing.

The participants were from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumer Affairs, Department of Town and Country Planning, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, National Sports Council of Malaysia, Royal Malaysia Police and the Institute of Language and Literature.

## ASEAN 2015 Workshop for Liaison Officers for Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia



A workshop for Liaison Officers for officers from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Malaysia took place from 20 to 22 April 2015 at the International Youth Centre in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. The three-day workshop was attended by 47 officers from various agencies under the Ministry and was organised upon request by the Ministry.

The specially tailored workshop aimed to equip the participants with the knowledge to identify key elements of protocol and liaison duties, understand the programmes and agenda for all ASEAN meetings and to make preparations to carry out liaison duties.

The workshop was part of the Ministry's preparation to host ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports and international events this year in conjunction with Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN.

The topics covered in the workshop were *Introduction to International and ASEAN Protocol, Introduction to the Ministry's Role, Site Visit, Walkabout and Simulation at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Cross-Cultural Awareness and Communication, Event Management's Administrative Programme and Arrangement, the Roles and Functions of a Liaison Officer, Language and Communication Skills, Personal Grooming and Etiquette, Sharing of Experience Session in Handling Events, Speaking and Listening Skills, Effective Writing Skills/Speech Writing, and Key Phrases and Simulation of Summit Proceedings.*

During the site visit at KLIA, the participants were given a better practical view of how arrangements were done, for instance, the arrival of VIPs to the host country and the departure of VIPs back to their respective countries. A briefing was given on airport facilities before the participants went on a tour of the various VIP rooms, gates, luggage area and also customs. The processes were shown at every checkpoint in detail by Puan Rahimah Yeop, the course facilitator and a simulation exercise was done at the end of the walkabout which every participant had to take part in and assume his/her role.

One of the participants, Miss Wardah Suhailda, said, "This course was really beneficial for me. I sincerely believe that I am now equipped to be a Liaison Officer and really look forward to the experience".

## Ziarah Ukhwah to Bangkok, Thailand

By Amir Hamzah Mohd Nasir



An initiative by the Islamic Bureau and Islamic Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the first series of *Ziarah Ukhwah* visit to Bangkok, Thailand was held from 25 February to 1 March 2015. The visit was organised to meet several purpose, among others, to develop Islamic knowledge among the staff of the Ministry at Embassies of Malaysia overseas through sessions conducted at the visited Embassy by certified panellists from Islamic organisations in Malaysia; to promote the correct image of Islam to the local communities, both Muslims and non-Muslims, at the selected city by providing accurate Islamic representation and eliminating the widespread misconception towards the religion; and to further strengthen the bonds (*ukhwah*) between the staff of the Embassy, programme participants from Malaysia and the local communities.

This pioneering initiative had also received encouraging support from various parties and agencies, namely, Malawakil Bangkok which served as host throughout the visit in providing hospitality and basic facilities; Majlis Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan (MAIWP) which contributed the sole funding for the programme; Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS) which conducted several programmes during the visit through one of its lecturers; Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) and Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS) which participated in the visit through their respective representatives; and Media Hijrah Corporation (TV AlHijrah) which participated through its production crew members.

The visit started with the arrival of participants in Bangkok on the evening of 25 February. Thereafter, a welcoming dinner was held at the residence of Her Excellency Dato' Nazirah Hussain, Ambassador of Malaysia to Thailand. The participants thanked the host for the warm hospitality and got to know the other members of the programme for the first time.

The sessions for the next few days were segmented according to subject. The first session on 26 February started in the morning at the Multipurpose Hall of the Embassy. Approximately 200 members of the audience were in attendance. The morning slots focused on Islamic *Aqeedah* (belief systems) and Islamic Guidelines on Food (Halal Matters). The session then continued after lunch with the recording of two episodes of *30 Minutes Bersama Ustaz Don*. The audience had a chance to experience live TV programme production and was later featured in the episodes which were aired on TV AlHijrah from 30 March to 3 April.

The sessions then continued the next day with a slot on Islamic funeral management. The participants were taught detailed procedures of funeral management according to Islamic teaching, before taking part in a practical simulation. The sharing on the management of dead bodies in various circumstances, based also on the recent experience involving the victims of the MH17 incident, served as important guidelines for the representatives of the Embassy in the future. In the evening, programme

participants joined the representatives of the Embassy in visiting Malaysian detainees at the Klong Prem Central Prison.

The schedule on 28 February was filled with site visits and community engagement at several locations arranged by the Embassy. It started with a visit to the Crescent International Islamic School in Bangkok. The founder of the school attained his undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as doctorate in Malaysia at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). He then put his knowledge into practice by establishing a primary learning institute with a balanced curriculum while focusing on Quranic studies.

The next stop was the Islamic Community of Prapadeng, Samutpraken. Rich with cultural heritage and historical traces, the community was the birthplace of renowned Islamic scholars in Thailand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The complete record of the history is now archived at the Prapadeng Cultural Centre. The chief exhibitor of the centre provided the participants with a complete tour of the exhibition.

The final stop of the day was at the Kaewnimitr Mosque, Soi Khlong Luang which was about an hour's drive from Bangkok. Despite the long distance from any major city, the Kaewnimitr Community was chosen as it remains one of the few communities which still preserve long Islamic tradition and way of life. The Malaysian participants were received with warm hospitality. The exchange of views between the Malaysian participants and leaders of the community helped towards better understanding of the diversity in religious perspectives of the two countries.

The closing ceremony of the *Ziarah Ukhwah* visit was held at the Embassy on the evening of 28 February. The participants once again thanked the Embassy for their great contribution towards the success of the programme. The next day on 1 March, all

the participants from Malaysia departed Bangkok for Kuala Lumpur.

This new programme was held successfully due to the wide-range of support from many organisations as stated earlier. The advanced coordination done by the Embassy of Malaysia in Bangkok helped to ensure the smooth flow of events throughout the visit. The programme had built strong foundational bonds among all who participated through effective sessions conducted by the subject-matter experts.

The direct engagement between the participants from Malaysia and the representatives from the Embassy as well as the local communities was instrumental in forming understanding of the different cultural perspectives across societies. The approach of consultation and dialogues around the table is the most effective medium of communication in connecting people to people of Malaysia and Thailand.

The production of several episodes of TV programme by TV AlHijrah also helped to further promote this initiative

to the outside societies. This initiative to promote Islam is timely today in the midst of almost global misunderstanding of and unjustified attack towards Islam. This programme would portray Islam as a religion that champions justice for all humanity and respect towards others.

*Continued from page 1*

Speaking further, Dato' Sri Najib added that ASEAN must accelerate programmes to harmonise standards, increase capital market and financial integration, and promote freer movement of goods, services, investments and talents among the ASEAN Member States.

The Leaders and Delegates also saw a colourful opening of the Summit with the ASEAN Anthem sung by the Permata Seni Negara choir and hologram presentation of iconic buildings in each ASEAN Member States as well as the launching of GOASEAN, the world's first ASEAN-focused travel channel.

The Leaders then had extensive discussions during the Plenary Session which was chaired by Dato' Sri Najib. In his remarks, Dato' Sri Najib highlighted that the establishment of an ASEAN Community by the end of the year will come against the backdrop of positive developments in the region. He also highlighted that People-Centredness must continue to be ASEAN's central ethos in the years to come.

On the South China Sea, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of resolving disputes and differences through peaceful means; and in line with universally recognised principles of international law, including UNCLOS 1982.

Malaysia has called for the strengthening of existing mechanisms, including the East Asia Summit (EAS). Malaysia has outlined a four-step process as a guide in our efforts to create robust institutions within ASEAN.

With the view of creating a People-Centred ASEAN, Malaysia aims to steer ASEAN closer to its peoples. Thus, the Plenary Summit was followed by a series of four interfaces with different segments of society – youth, civil society organisations, business groups and Parliamentarians. The interfaces discussed pertinent issues related to the respective sector of society.

This is consistent with this year's theme of the ASEAN Chairmanship, *Our People, Our Community, Our Vision* which means that 2015 and beyond, ASEAN will be focussing on the interests of its peoples – by placing its peoples at its core.

Apart from the Meeting at Leaders' level, there were a number of side events that were convened, among others, the Forum for Spouses of ASEAN Heads of State/Government and the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Leadership Forum organised by the Asian Strategic and Leadership Institute.

At the end of the two-day Summit, the

Leaders adopted three declarations, the first being the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on a People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN. The declaration spelled out ASEAN's specific commitments on the political, economic and socio-cultural pillars that will help create sustainable development in the region.

The Leaders also adopted the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates, which outlined ASEAN's recognition of and adherence to moderation as a tool for bridging differences and resolving disputes, and the Declaration on Institutionalising the Resilience of ASEAN and its Communities and Peoples to Disasters and Climate Change.

Malaysia also issued a Chairman Statement of the 26<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit which summarises the Leaders' discussions throughout the Summit.

The Summit concluded on a positive note. With the extensive discussion that the Leaders had in the two days, it is clear that ASEAN is making strong progress towards the establishment of an ASEAN Community by year-end.

## What They Say...



**Ashwin Kumar Ruhee**  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional  
Integration and International Trade,  
Republic of Mauritius  
(Participant of the *MTCP: English  
Language for Diplomacy Course 2015*)

“The course was very interesting and stimulating. It was practical-oriented and would contribute in enhancing our performance in our daily duties as diplomats. I have discovered many facts about Malaysia and the interaction with the other participants has broadened my horizon.”

“In my personal experience, this course was successful due to the various topics and important English tools that we have learned. Modules on Cross-Cultural Communications and Writing Skills were the most important to me.”



**Diego Javier Estigarribia  
Pena**  
Embassy of Paraguay in Egypt  
(Participant of the *MTCP: English  
Language for Diplomacy Course 2015*)

“It was a very interesting and lively workshop. The strengths of the workshop were the hands-on approach and the different tools that were presented to handle other cultures. Another benefit gained was the specific module on the do’s and don’ts of certain cultures such as European, Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Latin America.”



**Dr. Ainu Husna M. Suhaimi**  
Malaysian Agricultural Research and  
Development Institute  
(Participant of the *Workshop on  
Communicating Across Culture*)

“The course was very useful for those who will be posted overseas. Early exposure to the duties and responsibilities will make us be better prepared and knowledgeable in carrying out our duties. The course also gave us a chance to meet, get acquainted and exchange views on the tasks that we will face. The network should be maintained so that all of us can benefit from it.”



**Sharol Nizam bin Ahmad**  
Ministry of Defence, Royal Malaysian  
Airforce  
(Participant of the *SPKM: Pre-Posting  
Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff  
and Spouses 4/2015, Grade 38 and  
Below*)

## Upcoming Courses/Events at IDFR <sup>\*</sup>

Universiti Malaysia Sabah Student Ambassadors Programme	26 July-15 August 2015
MTCP: Strategic Analysis for International Participants 2015	27 July-14 August 2015
Arabic Level IX	28 July-17 December 2015
Arabic Level II	29 July-18 December 2015
French Level III	3 August-21 October 2015
Spanish Level V	3 August-21 December 2015
French Level VII	4 August-15 October 2015
French Level IX	7 August-18 December 2015
Economic Diplomacy Series 2/2015: Negotiating International Economic Agreements	11-12 August 2015
Say It Right 2/2015	18-20 August 2015
Basic Conversational Malay Course	1 September-17 November 2015
Effective Presentation Skills 2/2015	7-10 September 2015
Workshop on Public International Law	8-10 September 2015
Spanish Level III	8 September-17 November 2015
MTCP: Senior Executive Workshop on Diplomacy and Security for ASEAN Women Diplomats 2015	9-15 September 2015
ASEAN Secretariat Attachment Officers Programme for CLMV Officials	9-22 September 2015
Spanish Level II	9 September-2 December 2015
IDFR Lecture Series 4/2015: Regional Integration Towards a People Centric Community: Sharing the Experience of ASEAN and Mercosur	10 September 2015
French Level IV	28 September-18 December 2015
French Level VIII	29 September-17 December 2015
Ambassador Lecture Series 2/2015	30 September 2015

\* Subject to changes

### Best Wishes

#### To our new colleagues, who recently joined the IDFR family

Afdal Izal Md. Hashim  
Nur Idayu Abdullah  
Augustino Jude  
Sarah Zahirah Ruhama  
Siti Farsha Murni Izami

#### To our colleagues, who left us with pleasant memories

Rahimah Yeop – end of contract  
Jamiah Rozali – transferred to the Ministry of Education

#### To our colleagues who recently took the vows of matrimony

Norazlin Mohd Tahir  
Roslan Kamarudin  
Muhamad Syahfie Md Saleh

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