

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY YBHG. TAN SRI MOHD RADZI ABDUL RAHMAN,  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MALAYSIA  
THE ASEAN ANNIVERSARY FORUM  
5 OCTOBER 2012**

YB Senator A. Kohilan Pillay,  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

YBhg. Ambassador Aminahtun Hj. A Karim,  
Deputy Director General of IDFR

YBhg Associate Professor Dr. Jasmine Ahmad,  
Dean, Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato'-Dato',

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Good Morning and Salam Satu Malaysia.

I wish you all a very warm welcome to the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations Malaysia and the ASEAN Anniversary Forum 2012.

2. At the outset, let me express my sincere thanks and appreciation to YB Senator Kohilan Pillay, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Malaysia for taking time off from his busy schedule to be here today to address us on the topic "ASEAN Community 2012 : A People-Centred ASEAN".

3. Today's forum is a part of the activities organized by Malaysia to commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN this year. As some of you probably know, this Forum has been an annual event hosted jointly by IDFR, the Institute of ASEAN Studies and Global Affairs of University of Technology MARA and the ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat, Wisma Putra over the last several years. Its objective is to provide a platform to members of the public service, the academia, the private sector,

NGOs and the diplomatic community for open discussion on specific themes related to ASEAN.

4. The theme for this year's Forum "ASEAN Community 2015 – A People-Centred ASEAN" is significant and timely. Indeed, regional integration efforts can succeed only we place the peoples of our ASEAN family at the centre. In other words, we must make ASEAN matter to the peoples and include them in everything that it stands for and achieves. With less than three years remaining before 2015, such task is indeed challenging.

5. Towards establishing an ASEAN Community by 2015, efforts are being undertaken at the regional and national levels to ensure the implementation of the ASEAN Community Blueprints namely Political-Security, Economy and Socio-Cultural. Based on the Blueprints, all of ASEAN Member States also have to integrate the Blueprints activities and programmes into their respective national development plans. At the same time, efforts too are being undertaken to implement the ASEAN Connectivity agenda. To ensure that all these initiatives bear the desired outcome, it is therefore vital to encourage and facilitate the engagement as well as active participation of all stakeholders, especially the peoples, in integration and community building process. The convening of this forum is a small but significant step in the overall efforts to obtain this objective.

6. In this regard, we are indeed very privileged to hear from Yang Berhormat Senator the words of YB Foreign Minister on the steps being taken by Malaysia as a member of ASEAN and the challenges facing us in realizing the vision of a people-centred ASEAN by 2015.

7. On behalf of the organizers, I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the discussion panel, who would be making their presentations later today, for kindly agreeing to share their ideas and views on this important topic. I understand that they will be speaking of ASEAN from different perspectives – that is, of the youth, the private sector, the academia, NGOs, and the media which should make the discussion vibrant and thought-provoking.

8. To all of you who have come to this Forum, I thank you for your interest in ASEAN and for taking the time to attend this event.

9. Last not least, let me thank the organizers namely IDFR, UiTM and ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat for successfully hosting this Forum.

10. On that note, I wish you all a very interesting and fruitful forum.

Thank you.