

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY Y.BHG DATO' KU JAAFAR KU SHAARI,  
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IDFR AT THE ROUNDTABLE  
CONFERENCE ENTITLED "MALAYSIA-  
INDONESIA/THAILAND/VIETNAM RELATIONS TOWARDS  
STRENGTHENING ASEAN REGIONALISM -  
ASEAN: THE WAY FORWARD" AT IDFR ON 7-8 MARCH 2012**

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**Talking Points/Notes**

YB Senator Tan Sri Abu Zahar bin Dato' Nika Ujang, President of the Senate, Dewan Negara, Parliament of Malaysia

YBhg. Tan Sri Razali Ismail,  
Chairman of Foreign Policy Study Group

YAM Tunku Zain Al'-Abidin Tuanku Muhriz,  
President and Founder, Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs  
(IDEAS)

Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Tan Sri Tan Sri,

Dato-dato,

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning, selamat pagi, salam satu Malaysia & salam satu ASEAN

1. At the outset let me extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. I am very happy indeed that IDFR has been chosen

as the venue for this conference and hope that our facilities here will be conducive to your deliberations over the next two days on the topic “Malaysia-Indonesia/Thailand/Vietnam Relations towards Strengthening Regionalism - ASEAN – The Way Forward”.

2. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Foreign Policy Study Group (FPSG) for successfully putting together a very interesting conference programme involving speakers from four ASEAN countries namely Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam and Japan, ASEAN’s dialogue partner. I have no doubt at all that the wide range of topics related to the ASEAN Community that will be presented and discussed upon, is going to be very informative and interesting to all of us here.
3. Incidentally, IDFR has had the privilege of having a close working relationship with FPSG. We have worked together in hosting a number of events, including the one you are attending today.
4. The focus of this conference i.e. on strengthening ASEAN regionalism is very relevant indeed considering that 2015, the target year for achieving the “One ASEAN Community” is just three years away.
5. As I see it, conferences like the one we are attending today will provide the opportunity for greater interaction and the exchange of ideas and views between people of various backgrounds, especially the youth on the issue of the evolving ASEAN Community. It is also a way of forging better understanding among the peoples of ASEAN and in generating fresh ideas for advancing ASEAN unity and on strategizing ASEAN’s interaction with other regions and countries of the world.
6. I personally believe that, in a world characterized by constant geopolitical change and instability, it will be beneficial for ASEAN countries to be proactive in their interaction with each other and for

them to act collectively and strategically, as far as possible, in their interaction with other powers and regions. Though a lot of work has gone into forging closer ties between the ASEAN countries as well as their main dialogue partners since the establishment of ASEAN in 1967, many will agree with me that much more could be done. Perhaps, there is a need to focus more on “connectivity” and people to people interaction which, I understand, is now being given greater emphasis within ASEAN.

7. In that regard, I have noted with interest that a special place has been given to youth in this conference - with youth speakers from the participating ASEAN countries scheduled to speak on the role of youth with respect to promoting the ASEAN Community. From personal experience, I know that the internet generation of today is quite different from that of their forefathers in the way they view the world and on the opportunities they seek. As such, I have no doubt that they will come up with very bold and innovative ideas regarding the future of ASEAN.
8. On that note, I wish you all a very fruitful and interesting roundtable conference. Thank you