

Special Speech
By
H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi
Secretary-General of ASEAN

KOR-Asia Forum
22 November 2019, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Mr. Seung Myung-ho, Chairman of the Hankook Ilbo

Excellency Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Former Secretary-General of the UN

Excellency Mr. Le Luong Minh, Former Secretary-General of ASEAN

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to all of you.

1. I am pleased to be here at this KOR-Asia Forum to share with you my thoughts on promoting ASEAN-ROK cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Seung Myung-ho, Chairman of the Hankook Ilbo, for the warm welcome and hospitality.

2. The global economy remains vulnerable with synchronised slowdown and precarious outlook. As uncertainties loom on the outcomes of trade talks between the US and China, the business and investor community takes a cautious approach. Managing these uncertainties including

through strengthening regional cooperation will be important to maintaining peace and prosperity in the region.

3. Notwithstanding these uncertainties in the global economy, ASEAN's overall economic performance remains robust, growing at 5.2 percent in 2018. ASEAN is currently the fifth largest economy in the world, with a combined gross domestic product of 3.0 trillion US dollar in 2018. As a global trade powerhouse, the region's total trade reached 2.8 trillion US dollar in 2018. In the same year, the region also attracted 154.7 billion US dollar worth of investment, the highest in history and a 30.4 percent increase from the 2015 level.

4. Beyond these statistics, ASEAN has been undertaking various initiatives to further integrate the region. In line with our Community building agenda, ASEAN is working to enhancing connectivity, bolstering its readiness for the fourth industrial revolution and pursuing a sustainable future that leaves no one behind. ASEAN's partners meanwhile acknowledged the importance of keeping and having ASEAN at the center of regional developments.

5. To ensure that ASEAN Community Building complements the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs at the global level, a Roadmap to guide advancing complementarities between ASEAN Vision 2025 and SDGs for the period of 2020-2025 was developed.

6. We have also issued the ASEAN Declaration on Industry Transformation to Industry 4.0, reaffirming our commitment to advance

Industry 4.0 through the development of an ASEAN consolidated strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

7. There has been continued progress in advancing the ASEAN Smart Cities Network or ASCN, particularly in the implementation of the Smart City Action Plans, which contribute to the development of smart and sustainable cities. The support of ASEAN partners is crucial in facilitating partnerships for ASCN cities, and in providing support to develop ASCN capacity on smart city planning.

8. Sustained economic growth requires better connectivity. To further enhance connectivity across the region, ASEAN announced the Initial Pipeline of ASEAN Infrastructure Projects, which contains 19 infrastructure projects across transport, energy, and digital sectors with an estimated investment of 15 billion US dollar. ASEAN has prepared this Pipeline with strong emphasis on environmental and social impact analysis, in line with international best practices.

9. All ASEAN Member States are expected to join the ASEAN Single Window Live Operations by the end of this year. The ASEAN Single Window Live Operations will continue to open a vast window of opportunities for ASEAN to include more documents, such as the ASEAN Customs Declaration Document, electronic Phytosanitary Certificate, electronic Animal Health Certificate and electronic Food Safety Certificate to be exchanged through the ASEAN Single Window in the future.

10. Building human capital for the region is critical in driving competitiveness, prosperity and resilience for a sustainable future, amidst

challenges from rapid demographic, environmental and technological transformations. To this end, the Bangkok Declaration on Advancing Partnership in Education for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in ASEAN was adopted.

11. We welcomed the conclusion of text-based negotiations for the 15 Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership or RCEP Participating Countries and the commitment to sign the RCEP Agreement in 2020. RCEP will significantly boost the region's future growth prospects and contribute positively to the global economy, while serving as a supporting pillar to a strong multilateral trading system and promoting development in economies across the region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. Since its inception in 1989, the ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations has broadened the horizons of our cooperation from the initial focus of trade, investment and tourism into political security, economic and socio-cultural areas.

13. I am pleased to note ROK's position as ASEAN's fifth-largest trading partner and export destination. Bilateral ASEAN-ROK trade reached 161 billion US dollar in 2018, a doubling from 78 billion US dollar in 2008. Meanwhile, FDI inflows from the ROK to ASEAN stood at 6.6 billion US dollar in 2018, almost five times the 2008 level, making the ROK ASEAN's sixth-largest source of FDI. ASEAN, on the other hand, is ROK's second largest trading partner and the third largest investment destination.

14. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary of Dialogue Relations, we usher in a new chapter of growth and development as we review our collective progress and evaluate the prospects of our future cooperation in mutually beneficial areas.

15. ASEAN welcomes the New Southern Policy initiated by President Moon Jae-in in 2017, which aims to substantially deepen ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership based on the three pillars of 'People, Prosperity and Peace' that resonate well with the three pillars of ASEAN Community, namely ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Political Security Community. This is a major thrust to exemplify the importance of ASEAN to the ROK.

16. The New Southern Policy is not only an opportunity for ASEAN and Korea to deepen our multi-dimensional engagement. It resonates well with our recently adopted ASEAN Outlook on the Indo Pacific, and there is room for greater synergy including with sub-regional arrangements to maximise the benefits of our collective resources and deliver concrete outcomes. Thus, I look forward to seeing more concrete projects and activities to be implemented under these initiatives in the coming years.

17. While cooperation is a key to the region's prosperity and peace, the challenge is indeed how to sustain it in the midst of various uncertainties that confront the world and the region. I recommend four ways as follows:

18. First, we need to deepen and broaden regional integration as it unleashes economic opportunities and bring us closer. The

implementation of the New Southern Policy would help ASEAN and the ROK achieve the 200 billion US dollar bilateral merchandise trade as targeted by the Leaders at the 20th ASEAN-ROK Summit by capitalising on the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Agreement or AKFTA. This means we should ensure not only the effective implementation of the Third Protocol to Amend the Agreement on Trade in Goods under the AKFTA and support the ongoing efforts to further liberalise Sensitive Track products to increase the bilateral trade but also look into other areas that would supplement and complement trade liberalisation. Further liberalisation should also take account of products of ASEAN's export interests to balance trade between ASEAN and ROK, contributing to shared prosperity. More importantly, however, is the need to ensure that businesses take advantage of the opportunities made available by the AKFTA. This could be done through, among others, strengthening rules and disciplines – especially in the areas of trade facilitation and electronic commerce – and promoting economic cooperation in areas arising from rapid technological advancement.

19. Greater regional trade and investment are also being pursued under the RCEP, in which ASEAN and ROK are participating. I thank ROK for its consistent constructive contribution and support to the RCEP process. The implementation of RCEP will further boost ASEAN-ROK trade and investment in the region, and help realise the vision of the New Southern Policy. Both sides should therefore ensure that all efforts are exerted to achieve the target of signing the RCEP Agreement sometime in 2020.

20. Second, we need to enhance all three dimensions of physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity together. We must continue

to implement measures that will address critical investment in sustainable infrastructure, smart cities or towns, and the requisite human capital. We call on our partners, including ROK, to seize the opportunities created by Initial Pipeline of ASEAN Infrastructure Projects and the ASEAN Smart Cities Network.

21. Third, we should enhance our cooperation and policy collaboration in response to opportunities and challenges in the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Given Korea's position at the frontline of innovation and digitalisation, and the rapidly growing digital market in ASEAN, there is immense space for both sides to cooperate in the development of digital economy and society, cybersecurity, e-governance, and solutions to bridge the digital divide across all walks of society.

22. Fourth, we need to build a strong community of peoples. I always believe in the strength of our peoples to make positive contributions to our Community. This is why I have placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of people-to-people connectivity to foster peace and prosperity. Since the announcement of the New Southern Policy, there have been significant efforts to translate it into concrete cooperation programmes between ASEAN and ROK, including through ROK's increased contribution to the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund. As the New Southern Policy puts 'People' first, we hope to see more people to people exchanges through activities ranging from tourism, education to sports, culture, and youth. The hosting of the ASEAN-ROK Centre in Seoul and the ASEAN Culture House in Busan demonstrates an enduring commitment towards cooperation with

Confidential

ASEAN. Moreover, they serve as gateways to raise awareness, connect and bring our peoples closer.

23. ASEAN looks forward to the successful outcomes of the ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit 2019 which would add momentum towards advancing ASEAN-ROK relations and robust implementation of the New Southern Policy. As we forge partnership into the future, we continue to stand side by side and come together to promote peace and prosperity for our peoples.

Thank you.
