

SPEECH BY
THE HONOURABLE DATO MUSTAPPA SIRAT,
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
AS THE CHAIR OF 16TH ASEAN TELMIN
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 17TH ASEAN TELMIN
30TH NOVEMBER 2017, SIEM REAP, KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Bismillahir Rahmannir Rahim

His Excellency Bin Chhin, Permanent Deputy Prime Minister, Acting Minister in Charge of Office of the Council of Ministers, a High Representative of Samdech Akka Maha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia,

His Excellency Tram Iv Tek, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication of the Kingdom of Cambodia,

ASEAN Ministers, TELMIN Leaders, Dialogue Partners and Members of delegations,

The Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN,

His Excellency Mr. Lim Hong Hin

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum and a very good morning.

1. Speaking as Chairman of the 16th ASEAN Telecommunication & IT Minister Meeting let me at the outset, extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to The Honorable Bin Chhin, Permanent Deputy Prime

Minister, Acting Minister in Charge of the Council of Ministers, for his presence today to grace the opening of the 17th ASEAN Telecommunications & IT Ministers Meeting.

2. Your presence today, Excellency, illustrates the importance and the commitment that the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia attaches to the progress and unity of ASEAN, especially through ASEAN's collaboration in telecommunication.

3. Through you, Excellency, let me also express our thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Cambodia, for their gracious hospitality accorded to us throughout our stay in this ancient city of Siem Reap. It is indeed a great privilege for me to be able to walk down the memory lane after my last visit some 17 years ago.

Excellencies,

4. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of ASEAN in 1967. This meeting therefore, a fitting occasion to reaffirm our commitment to bring ASEAN closer to the people, to build an inclusive, peaceful, prosperous, resilient and caring ASEAN Community.

5. As we celebrate this long years of establishment, we take this special moment to reflect upon the various progress that ASEAN has achieved through time and challenges.

6. From a humble beginning with the common endeavor to promote cooperation for economic progress and peace, ASEAN has emerged as a regional alliance to forge a common purpose of unity in diversity and to

embrace the ideal of common prosperity through economic and social integration among the community of South East Asian nations.

7. Through high and lows, and through the testing times of regional and global developments, ASEAN has strived to be what it is now, an ASEAN Community in its own unique way, threading through challenges leveraging on friendship and cooperation.

Excellencies,

8. The ICT Development Index 2017, which was recently launched by the International Telecommunications Union offers a useful benchmark on ICT development that takes into consideration the key requirements of access, usage and skills.

9. Most relevant in our context is the glaring gaps and disparity which are quite glaring and indicates the existence of digital divide within ASEAN.

10. The difference in access alone, such as on those related to availability of computer and internet access at a household, reflect the immediate need to address even the most basic necessities for the users to appreciate ICT and its potential.

11. The modest levels of subscription strongly suggest the need to call for greater awareness on the essentials of digital literacy that would gradually spur demand for the technology.

12. Also closely related is the level of ICT usage in ASEAN, as there remains a myriad of challenging issues that contributes to underlying reasons for the prevailing situation.

13. One inherent aspect in some countries is the dispersion of wider distribution of population and complexity in geographical terrain. The option for Universal Services Obligation, as a means to provide access to the underserved areas, has its own dynamics especially at a time of economic challenge. A weak business case often hinders our effort in making further progress to build more broadband infrastructures.

14. We, nevertheless, must remain adamant on the important role of ICT to the economic growth and ensure an equitable development for our people through equal access and efficiency of ICT services.

Excellencies,

15. More than two decades ago, we saw the emergence of the third industrial revolution characterized by the development of electronic and information technology.

16. This, in turn, has paved the way for powerful innovation and creative ideas that enhances efficiency and automation in process and production.

17. ICT now cuts across all aspects of life, fused between physical, digital and biological spheres, with a very fine line dividing among them.

18. Building on this trend, many now believe that we are on the verge of the 4th Industrial Revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work and relate to one another.

19. We may have already witnessed the development of so called disruptive innovations with the emergence of the Internet of Everything, OTT, the block chain and many others that challenge the traditional norms and wisdom.

20. Given the magnitude of these changes, in terms of scope, velocity and complexity, the turn of event would not be something that we have seen before.... and the transformational effect of this development is yet to be witnessed by the human race...

21. But, one thing is clear, according to the World Economic Forum, the response to it must be integrated and comprehensive involving all stakeholders of the global polity, from the public and private sectors to academia and the civil society.

22. This is where I see the importance of our meeting in Cambodia today, to take stock of the major developments that have taken place and to ensure that ASEAN remains at the forefront of technological revolution.

23. As a proviso, I feel, ASEAN must endeavor to invest in infrastructure and human capital to enhance its ICT readiness.

24. We must promote equitable development, with connectivity and easy access to internet, and that our people must be nurtured to show high degree of passion in ICT.

25. The ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020 has set out a clear roadmap to achieve these objectives. It involves among others, the development of human capacity and creating awareness on ICT even at an early age.

26. ASEAN too has been very creative, in that, we are also exploring ways and means in which we can facilitate the mobile segment of the ASEAN population with easier access to internet with price transparency wherever they are in any part of ASEAN.

27. A connected and innovative community of ASEAN will no doubt elevate ASEAN's economic standing to a higher level, as the most progressive and dynamic region in the world stage.

28. As a single market ASEAN with combined GDP of US\$2.5 trillion, ASEAN is already among the largest economies in the world.

29. As we touch on innovation, we cannot ignore the fact that the cyber world remains vulnerable to all kind of exploitation and attack by ill-intent intruders. This can have a devastating effect on large institutions such as the banking sectors, medical institution, power generation and even the digital economy as a whole.

30. Cyber Security in my view, is partly an issue of on-going race between the champions of IT and the baddies who seek to profit by

undermining innovation and creativity. For the small few, it is also a platform for manipulation and criminal intent.

31. ASEAN's collaboration in Cyber Security will be elevated to a higher plain, as we endorsed the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy. This will hopefully lead to the formation a coordinated regional actions in the form of ASEAN Computer Response Team or ASEAN CERT.

32. In addition, we also welcome the convening of ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity hosted by Singapore as a very useful platform to discuss and to have an in-depth analysis on all aspects of Cyber Security.

33. The forum also involved important players and stakeholders coming from the regulators, industries, academia and the non-governmental organisation. For that we would like to express our appreciation to Singapore for taking the leadership role in ASEAN on Cyber Security.

34. Finally, Excellency, let me also take this opportunity, as the outgoing Chairman of TELMIN, to express my sincere thanks to ASEAN Member States for the support and assistance extended to Brunei Darussalam throughout our tenure as Chair of the 16th ASEAN TELMIN.

35. My heartfelt thanks especially to the Senior Officials, members of the Working Groups, the Governing Council, ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators Council (ATRC), ASEAN ICT Centre

and of course, members of the ASEAN Secretariat for their hard work and dedications in bringing our progress to a higher level.

36. I would also like to express my best wishes to the incoming Chairman, The Honourable Tram Iv Tek, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and to assure him of our full support and cooperation. I am confident that with his wisdom and vast experience, the 17th ASEAN TELMIN Meeting will come to a fruitful conclusion.

Aw Kun Ch'm / Thank you.