

**INTERVENTION BY  
H.E. LE LUONG MINH  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF ASEAN  
AT THE  
17<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY (ASCC) COUNCIL MEETING  
Iloilo City, PHILIPPINES  
8 March 2017**

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*Madam Chairman, E. DR. JUDY M. TAGUIWALO*

*Excellencies, Ministers,*

*Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I join the Ministers expressing, my sincere appreciation to the Philippines for the excellent arrangements made and the warm hospitality reserve for delegation participating in this very important ASCC Council Meeting.
2. 2017 is an important year for ASEAN as we are celebrating ASEAN's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Celebration events throughout ASEAN and beyond are being planned to mark this significant milestone.
3. The ASEAN Secretariat has been coordinating the planning and resource mobilisation for these events and I am sure that under the Philippines' chairmanship 2017 in the very meaningful year for us.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

4. As we meet today to discuss issue under the ASCC pillar, we once again reaffirm for the importance for "*the people pillar*" to reach out, to build and sustain a positive impact on the lives of the people of ASEAN, especially the poor, the most vulnerable and the underprivileged.
5. We appreciate the choice of the theme and priorities for 2017 as well as the conclusion of important Declarations that have been tabled for the Council's endorsement to be signed or adopted by the Leaders of ASEAN. These will contribute to the facilitation of our people or citizens of ASEAN to be engaged and having the benefits of the ASEAN initiatives and the ASEAN activities.
6. The successful implementation of the work programmes under the ASCC Pillar will require the close leadership and guidance from the Council.
7. As the ASCC Blueprint 2025 will be mainly implemented through the work of the ASCC sectoral bodies, the successful implementation of their work plans/work programmes will need guidance from SOCA, as the supporting body to the Council

especially on addressing cross-cutting issues and ensuring alignment with the ASCC Blueprint 2025 and other components of the ASEAN Vision 2025 (including the APSC and AEC Blueprints, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity and the IAI Work Plan III).

8. The ASEAN Secretariat has updated the Meeting on the status of cross-cutting and ASEAN community building issues in implementing the ASCC Blueprint 2025 and in promoting complementarities between ASEAN Vision 2025 and SDGs.

9. The ASEAN Secretariat has also reported to the meeting the (1) development of ASCC Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework and (2) the proposed Consultancy to finalise the ASCC Results KPIs which is part of one of the monitoring systems within the framework. In this connection, we wish to express our high appreciation to the SOCA Leaders and the Ministers for endorsing the M&E framework, including the endorsement of A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation of the ASCC Blueprint 2025 and the endorsement of the consultancy project to finalise the results framework.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

10. Almost a decade ago, the ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers; better known as the Cebu Declaration. I am optimistic that under the leadership of the Philippines and the strong commitment of all ASEAN Member States, ASEAN will be able to finally adopt an instrument to protect and to promote the rights of ASEAN migrant workers as called for in the Cebu Declaration.

11. I would like to also commend the leadership of the Philippines and the ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters or the ACCSM on their strategic initiative to tap the civil servants in ASEAN Member States as catalysts for the achievement of ASEAN Vision 2025. I look forward to the endorsement by the Council of this important outcome document.

12. I also note that SOCA has exchanged views on a Culture of Prevention Agenda. This is a new face of ASEAN. We need to use the power of the people-pillar to inculcate the sense of belonging, and the culture of prevention to keep ASEAN free from various forms of violence, including violent extremism. This can begin with ASCC-focused thrusts and strengths in addressing comprehensive socio-economic problems such as poverty, inequality, disparity, marginalization, social exclusion, youth unemployment, sense of social injustices, lack of access to education, health care and other basic government services and lack of economic/employment opportunities, which are commonly seen as the root causes of violence.

13. As we celebrate the International Women's Day on 8 March, all women in ASEAN for their invaluable contributions to the building of the ASEAN Community deserve our special appreciation. We look forward to the adoption of the ASEAN

Declaration on Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals at the 31st ASEAN Summit.

14. The theme of the ASEAN Chairmanship this year and the six thematic priorities aim at nurture, peace, growth, resiliency and innovation for a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN.

15. Under the Philippines chairmanship, I am fully confident that our work in 2017 will take us a step closer towards the achievement of the ASEAN Vision 2025.

16. The ASEAN Secretariat will continue to unwavering support to the Member States in pursuing of the objective of the Community.

*Thank you.*

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