

Newspaper	Malaysian Reserve
Date	5 August 2015

Najib: Asean should be confident about its future

Malaysian Reserve - 5/8/2015

Call for greater Asean integration and Asean's united voice to be heard more frequently

by FARAH ADILLA



Najib speaking at the launch of the 48th AMM in Kuala Lumpur yesterday

ASEAN community should be confident about its future and be vocal about it, said Prime Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak.

Greater Asean integration and the creation of Asean Economic Community could drive annual regional gross domestic product growth by 6%-8% and Asean becomes the world's fourth largest economy by 2050 he added, quoting reports by Australia and New Zealand Banking Group published in April.

"The report also observed that our potential is greater than is commonly understood. That is true.

"If Asean is sometimes underestimated, we must be careful we are not guilty of

that ourselves. We believe it is timely for Asean's united voice to be heard more frequently at multilateral forum," he said.

The Malaysian PM was speaking at the launch of the 48th Asean Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Najib said one of the eight priorities set by Malaysia as Chair this year is to enhance Asean's role as a global player as there is no reason why Asean should not take a more

active role in the international community.

Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman said the establishment of the Asean community by the end of 2015 is very significant as it signals to the rest of the world how far and how much Asean has and can achieve in coming together as one community.

"Our Asean Community makes us stronger and more economically secured, more open to trade and outside investment. Less vulnerable to

global financial volatility," Anifah said.

According to statistics, investment in Asean reached US\$136.2 billion (RM524.37 billion) last year up 15.7% year-on-year. Last year's regional trade amounted to US\$2.53 trillion, with Asean leaders expecting a growth rate of 4.9% this year.

The 48th AMM and related meetings are held in Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, from Aug 1-6, 2015, attended by the 10 Asean foreign ministers and the Asean secretary general.

The format of the 48th AMM is in plenary and retreat sessions.

During the plenary session, the ministers will discuss mainly the establishment of Asean Community and progress of post-2015 Vision.

During the retreat, ministers will exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual concern, including regional architecture and Asean's external relations.