

**ASEAN Member States Should Work Together To Strengthen ASEAN Community - Najib  
Bernama  
Aug 8, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- The Asean member states should work together to strengthen the Asean Community so that it can act as one on the global stage, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

He said with a community that was strong, they could forged new agreements with bigger countries and other groups, which would benefit the regional grouping.

"The more we strengthen the ASEAN Community, the more we will gain," he said when launching the 48th ASEAN Day celebration here today.

Najib said ASEAN Community, which now consisted of over 600 million people, and the third largest workforce in the world, was poised to become a major global player.

"According to one estimate, ASEAN could constitute the fourth largest market after the EU (European Union), US (United States) and China by 2030. That is only 15 years away," he said.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said with the Intra-ASEAN trade increased to US\$609 billion last year, a jump from US\$458 billion in 2008 after the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint came into effect, it would be further increased with further elimination of barriers.

"If we managed to raise that level of trade from 24 percent to 40 percent, the incremental impact on the ASEAN economy could be US\$2.5 trillion annually," he said.

About the 48th ASEAN day, Najib said "this is a day that has a special resonance for me, as my father, Tun Razak, was one of the five founding fathers who signed the Bangkok Declaration in 1967 which brought ASEAN into being."

He said the declaration bound ASEAN members to actively promote peace, stability, growth, progress and development, with an emphasis on collaboration and mutual assistance.

Since then, ASEAN had been contributing towards tangible and significant progress, not only for the region as a whole but also individually for its member states and its people, he said.

"We need to raise the awareness on ASEAN, its great achievements of the past and the brighter horizons for all it should bring about in the future," he said.

Najib also launched ASEAN guide book entitled 'My ASEAN My Home'

Also present were Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, ASEAN secretary general, Le Luong Minh and Deputy Foreign Minister, Datuk Seri Rizal Merican Naina Merican.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1159807>