

**ASEAN People Should Participate, Contribute Towards Community-Building – Najib  
Bernama  
Aug 8, 2016**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- ASEAN people should not only benefit from ASEAN but also participate in and contribute towards ASEAN Community-building efforts for the association to progress.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said a prerequisite to establish a true ASEAN Community instilled a sense of belonging and identity within and across the people of its 10 nations.

"It is only then that we will have an ASEAN Community that is truly cohesive and reflects the aspiration of its peoples," he said in a statement in conjunction with the 49th ASEAN Day celebration today.

While wishing Happy ASEAN Day to all Malaysians and the peoples of ASEAN, Najib said much remained to be done before ASEAN could truly consider itself a single and united community in practice, as well as in name.

ASEAN community-building is a continuous and evolving process, and the momentum must be maintained to ensure political cohesion, economic integration and social and regional inclusion, he added.

"Our (ASEAN) Community must be able to respond effectively to the emerging threats and challenges presented by the rapidly changing regional and global landscape," said the prime minister.

Therefore, he said, the theme selected by Laos as ASEAN Chairman this year, 'Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community', was timely and appropriate as it reflected the ASEAN people's collective will to continue to integrate its region and solidify its community.

Furthermore, Najib said that almost five decades ago, ASEAN's founding fathers signed the Bangkok Declaration that formally established the association, adding it was a historic day, marking a commitment by the Southeast Asian nations to work towards a future of peace, stability and prosperity for the region.

"As we celebrate ASEAN Day this year, we do so for the first time as a single Community. For on Dec 31, 2015, under the chairmanship of Malaysia, the 10 ASEAN Member States inaugurated the ASEAN Community.

"This was a significant milestone for the region, building on the resilience and dynamism that have been the hallmarks of ASEAN through its journey of nearly half a century," he said, adding that ASEAN people should be proud of what was accomplished for almost 50 years.

Established on Aug 8, 1967, ASEAN comprises Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2016 BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1270673>