

**CLOSING REMARKS BY YAB PRIME MINISTER: ASEAN  
AUDITOR CONFERENCE 2025**

By : DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM  
Venue : PUTRAJAYA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE  
(PICC)  
Date : 28/05/2025

---

**CLOSING REMARKS BY**

**YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM**

**PRIME MINISTER**

**ASEAN AUDITOR CONFERENCE 2025**

**28 MAY 2025 | WEDNESDAY | 11.00 AM**

**PUTRAJAYA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (PICC)**

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Salam sejahtera.

Alhamdulillah. Nahmaduhu wanusolli ala rasulihil kareem.

**YBhg. Tan Sri Dato' Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar,**

Ketua Setiausaha Negara;

**YBhg. Dato' Seri Wan Suraya Wan Mohd Radzi,**

Ketua Audit Negara;

Ketua-ketua Audit dari ASEAN dan negara-negara yang turut hadir;

Duta-duta dan Pesuruhjaya Tinggi.

1. Terima kasih atas kerjasama yang diberikan untuk menjayakan persidangan yang saya anggap kritikal. Bila kita bicara soal tatakelola dan governance, tonggakunya adalah keupayaan kita memberikan

penilaian berdasarkan audit yang professional. Jadi saya ucap terima kasih, apa lagi inisiatifnya itu, ASEAN.

2. Kita baru selesai malam tadi Sidang ASEAN, Negara-negara Teluk GCC dan China. Pagi tadi, di Kuala Lumpur diteruskan dengan Sidang Usahawan, Pelabur yang diselenggara oleh Fortune di antara ASEAN, GCC dan China. Saya memohon maaf kerana sedikit terlambat kerana dari situ pagi tadi, saya ziarah yang dikasihi Kebawah Duli Tuanku Sultan Brunei yang sedang dirawat dan beristirehat di hospital. Jadi minta maaf kerana agak sedikit terlambat.
3. It is not in terms of Audit Conference, it is no excuse for you to come slightly late. I do apologise because after the International Conference of Business Community, investing community, focusing on digital transformation, AI, I had to spend a bit of time to visit our dear brother, His Majesty Sultan of Brunei who was recuperating and resting at the hospital. So, I do apologise because you should not come late particularly to the Audit Conference. I will fail the audit in terms of time.
4. So, let us talk about ASEAN's commitment, unity, shared values reaffirmed during the 46th summit in Kuala Lumpur. But an integral part of this cohesiveness is to ensure that we remain true to our ideals, a community that focuses on responsible and good governance. And the core of this good governance is to be accountable. We talk about inclusivity, sustainability, yes. But if you look at the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, the premise is of course,

responsible and good governance that represents the conscience of the majority of our people who wants to reach the country of excesses, endemic corruption and waste.

5. That is why I strongly support ASEAN Audit Institutions to implement this vision and most so because we have this woman of steel to head as Auditor General. Extremely tough and unpopular. It doesn't matter because she's not contesting the elections, or at least for now, I don't know about the future. But the four strategic pillars fostering good governance, transparency and accountability. That is why I made a particular reference to strengthening administrative systems in our various countries and across Member States. So, it is still governance as the prime strategic pillar. Then only you talk about improving audit quality and financing reporting compliance. Because through this you can propel economic integration through reliable financial data for investors and stakeholders.
6. People say, well, only through good governance, good auditing, you'll attract investments. That's to me critical but not pivotal. It is your responsibility as a person, particularly if you were given a task, to be accountable, to be true, to preserve your own dignity, to do an honest job. It is easier said than done. Because now in government, I realise it's not necessarily easy, but it can be considerably unpopular. You take action due to the audit report.
7. There will be a stream of county of people with vested interest will oppose. You say, you must have a transparent tender process. You, of course antagonise those who will be familiar to the old ways. You say,

rid the country of corruption or act against those who have amassed and squandered billions of the country. I leave my support. So, thank you Wan Suraya and your team because you give enough data and evidence to support effort to improve governance in this country.

8. So now we extend beyond this, about upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability, and through this, strengthen anti-corruption frameworks, again through the independence of auditors and regulators. Now, auditors in the past, including the big audit firms are not entirely free from being the target due to excesses. You know that here in this country, and of course, if you look at the more developed industrialised economies, there has been complicity at times. If you look at, for example, the story of the 1MDB scandal, complicity of the big audit firms.
9. So, it's not a matter of hectoring by them or lecture. We have enough. So, we have to prepare to face the challenges in our country and in our region. That's why to my mind, it's a particularly important endeavour that audit institutions to be empowered to operate independently and to follow the trail of accountability wherever it leads.
10. Having said that, I am telling you as Prime Minister, it is not easy. Particularly when we have a tough Director General (DG) like this, but she's doing her job. That is why I've mentioned this to my Cabinet colleagues. Even I don't determine what should be the results of the priority. They briefed me, of course, recently, last two weeks also about the report, but brief not for me to go and interfere and change

report. I said, brief me just before I present the report to the Cabinet to be presented to the Parliament for an open public debate. That is what we mean by good governance and transparency.

11. And this ultimately will strengthen governance and integrity, and will be reflected in sustained improvement again to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). So let me give you this encouragement. You want to see the future of ASEAN? It is this cohesiveness, this is trust, this is bond that would want to showcase the region, the most peaceful region in the world right now, and the fastest growing economy in the world—650 million people. But to showcase not because of the numbers, not because of our economic strength, but because we represent a region that's peaceful and that honest, good principles of good governance and accountability.
12. I'm extremely pleased, through our consensus, we agreed with this Vision 2045. And this is what we mean. And I believe all the Director Generals of ASEAN should grasp, digest this report, and see the thinking of our policymakers. Our duty is, of course, to give you first, political stability, which is a precondition but then, clarity of policies and we see this working on ASEAN.
13. I mentioned this morning that this 26 pages statement was endorsed by ASEAN leaders, GCC, and China. The interest is not to combat or to have contentious debates with the rest, no. We talk about centrality in ASEAN. As an independent country, we should work with everyone for the benefit of our people. So, we decided to work with the GCC, and because we are in the region with this growing economic and

military power of China, it makes a lot of sense for us to go and work with them. At the same time, the United States remains one of the most important players in terms of investments and trade. So, we must continue to engage with EU, with all countries.

14. I must mention Yemen, with the ambassadors saying ‘Yemen is here, Yemen is here’, of course I can see. So, do we take that position? And I think that consensus has given this rise. But the principles again, we’re talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI) this morning. I’m going to relate because you’re not focusing on AI, and some talk from OpenAI to ChatGPT, there all there. So, I said look, can I then extend the discourse a little bit more? Because I think in audit, in governance, in customs and immigration, we’re now exploring into AI. You could be pleased to be able to monitor effectively, and they would help in terms of accountability and audit.
15. But don’t ever forget: why do you want to have a good auditing system? And now, with, through AI—why do you want to talk about governance? Why do you want to resolve the problem of abject poverty and to address the issue of inequality? Because we want to protect human dignity. Because we have values. Why do you want to have a good auditor auditing system? Because we want to avoid excesses, abuses, and corruption. Why? Because we want to protect the honour and dignity of every man and woman. Essentially that, which means the issue of faith, of values.
16. So, when you talk about AI, don’t ever ignore the importance of values, of faith, of moral and ethical precepts. And I believe among

the auditors, among the staff and the people you train this must always be instilled. This is not only a matter of sound public finances, but also to uphold values which will serve yourself, family, country, and region with peace, fairness, accountability, and opportunity for all. I hope I'm not digressing from your focus of discussion, but I feel strongly that without focusing on the issue of human dignity, shared values, common destiny, we are leaving it to the unscrupulous players devoid of morality and ethics.

17. Corruption is tolerated, the oppression of man by man is condoned, killings and colonisation that cause so much devastation are tolerated for 101 reasons. That's why I'm very pleased, one important resolution in the statement is on Gaza. I mean what such hypocrisy!. This is 2025, we have the best auditors, but we don't audit character and values of the human being. Every day we see children and women being bombed and killed. It doesn't touch our concern and feeling probably because of their colour or their faith but this is an abandonment of principles and values.
18. You can have a very good audit system. That's why I have stressed even for auditors, accountants, regulators, public and private sector leaders we must reaffirm this essential truth that good and accountable governance based on values and human dignity must be the foundation of a sustainable and equitable development.
19. So, thank you Wan Suraya, the team, the guests and speakers that have given all the support for this conference and may you continue to lead the auditors if they are really independent and effective as

powerful as the Anti-Corruption Commission. We want them to continue to play that role, not because they are vicious, not because they are politically biased, but because they honour these core principles and values.

20. How many countries have you seen if you understand historical antecedents that have achieved greatness in the past but degenerated into decline purely because of greed, corruption, and abuse, which do not uphold these core principles? Even in Islamic history, you know that the institution of hisbah, like public accountability, was quite core and fundamental. But we have lost them, we talk about Islam, but then we don't honour or implement the core principles and values about truth, about honour, about human dignity, and hisbah which is public accountability.
  
21. So, thank you very much for being patient enough to listen to this morning lecture. Normally, you know, I don't subscribe too much to this text than Wan Suraya already prepare but I share the sentiments here, you can circulate. But normally I choose, in conferences such as this which I think the foundation of good governance to express what I strongly believe, and I express from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you. Terima kasih.

**Copyright of the Prime Minister's Office Official Website**

Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2025/05/closing-remarks-by-yab-prime-minister-asean-auditor-conference-2025-2/>