

THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

THE PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, CENTRE MANILA, 15
DECEMBER 1987

Madam Chairperson; Your Majesty and Your Excellencies; Ladies and Gentlemen.

With the blessing of the Almighty, we have come to the conclusion of this Third Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government. The Meeting has been a significant event.

2. All of us, the ASEAN Heads of Government, have come to Manila with great confidence for this Meeting despite dire predictions by all and sundry. I congratulate our hosts for making the excellent arrangements in all aspects to make the Meeting possible. My delegation and I have had a pleasant and comfortable sojourn in this colourful and vibrant city of Manila.

3. The atmosphere surrounding our Meeting has been characteristically ASEAN -- warm, friendly and sincere. We had frank discussions and serious exchanges of views on many issues. We went over the reports and deliberated over the recommendations of the Ministers. We agreed on a number of things in keeping with the spirit of consensus, mutual respect and understanding. We were particularly in accord on one major aspect of ASEAN : the need to enhance ASEAN cooperation particularly in the economic areas.

4. Our deliberations have covered a wide area. This has largely been necessitated by many recent developments in the international arena which are inextricably linked to our hopes and fears, our expectations and our vision of the future. The ASEAN member countries cannot be effectively insulated from these developments. Nor can we isolate ourselves in the light of increasing interdependence.

5. The political, economic and security interests of the member countries are diverse, yet intertwined. The increasing strategic and economic importance of Southeast Asia and of ASEAN in particular, as well as the continuing turmoil in Indochina makes it more relevant for the region to achieve accelerated development and progress and to maintain durable peace and stability. ASEAN's commitment to achieving the early realization of ZOPFAN should be translated into positive action, particularly now that the superpowers themselves have come to a new and positive phase in their relationship with one another.

Madam Chairperson,

6. The focus of this Summit has most appropriately been on ASEAN economic cooperation. For it is through economic cooperation that we can hope to promote development in this region, thus bringing about an environment of peace and stability. However, we have our own realistic expectations for ASEAN and of ASEAN. When our countries ventured into ASEAN as a regional grouping

designed to help the member states, we knew of its potentials and possible limitations. We stood ready to develop those potentials in 1976 by signing the Declaration of ASEAN Concord. We again stand ready to further exploit those potentials. This we have duly said in the Declaration which we just signed today. This Manila Declaration is testimony to the continued commitment of the member states to ASEAN.

7. The Declaration reaffirms our commitment to the objective of ASEAN and states openly what we want for the future of ASEAN. It is an important milestone in ASEAN's progress. It is a synthesis of thoughts, ideas and visions; a fair and frank assessment of ASEAN's achievements and shortcomings, and a guide for a realistic approach towards ASEAN cooperation. The signing of the four agreements and memoranda of understanding is a significant indicator of ASEAN's seriousness in developing on-going programmes in economic cooperation.

8. ASEAN's good standing in the international community is beyond doubt. To the international community ASEAN is a reality, to us in the region it is both a reality and a state of mind. The fact that we have developed a successful dialogue relationship with the industrialized countries is indeed a feather in ASEAN's cap. Later today, we meet the Prime Minister of Japan, leader of one of ASEAN's most important Dialogue Partners. I am sure we will have a very fruitful discussion with him.

Madam Chairperson,

9. I have been fully satisfied at the outcome of this Meeting. I am sure what we have achieved here in Manila will provide the motivation for increased cooperation among the ASEAN countries in the various areas. Such increased cooperation should be accompanied by a gradual and systematic improvement in the ASEAN machinery.

10. I wish to thank and congratulate you, Madam Chairperson, for the efficient and elegant handling of the proceedings of our meeting. You have shown us that the first woman President in ASEAN is a person of great calibre and charm. On behalf of the Malaysian delegation, I also wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of the Philippines for the excellent arrangements, warm reception and generous hospitality that make this Third Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government a successful and memorable one. Thank you.