

19/11/2015 - Gala Dinner ASEAN Civil Service

Honourable ASEAN Heads of Civil Service,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners from ASEAN Member States & Members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Senior Officials from the Civil Service of ASEAN Member States and Malaysia,

Participants of the ASEAN Civil Service Innovation Conference,

Athletes and officials from the First ASEAN Civil Service Games,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Wrt. Wbt. & Salam 1Malaysia,

A very good evening and a warm welcome to all of you.

It is a great pleasure for me to see so many of you gathered here for the ASEAN Civil Service Gala Dinner this evening. Indeed, it is a momentous occasion for the ASEAN Civil Service fraternity to congregate over the past four days for the inaugural three-in-one programme comprising the ASEAN Heads of Civil Service Retreat, ASEAN Civil Service Innovation Conference, and the ASEAN Civil Service Games. I believe this is the biggest ever ASEAN Civil Service gathering that we have had to date.

2. Tonight's gathering signifies the strong solidarity of ASEAN Civil Servants that augurs well for the establishment of an ASEAN Community at the end of this year, where our people can enjoy the benefits of an integrated, connected and inclusive Community.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. ASEAN was formed 48 years ago in a world that was totally different from what we know today. ASEAN was born out of necessity - to prevent regional conflict, to bring development and to strengthen relations between nations in the region. It has been a long journey for ASEAN and much has been achieved since then. The year 2015 is certainly a memorable and significant milestone in the history of ASEAN as we move towards an integrated ASEAN Community - more so for Malaysia being the Chair of ASEAN this year.

4. I am heartened to note that ASEAN Member States are taking appropriate steps to fulfill their commitment towards a 'People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN'. This is in line with the aspirations of the people of ASEAN for more effective and responsive governance, higher standard of living, better environmental protection, stronger empowerment of women and opportunities for all.

5. Globally, governments have been focusing on Civil Service transformation in response to rising expectations and demands for a high performing citizen-centric Civil Service. In keeping with this global trend, ASEAN Member States are implementing transformation programmes to support their respective national agenda. The Civil Service of ASEAN Member States plays an important role to ensure that various mechanisms are put in place to realise the ASEAN Community.

6. Taking cognisance of this, the ASEAN Heads of Civil Service Retreat convened on Tuesday to deliberate how best to empower the Civil Service in supporting the ASEAN Community. This is reflected through the historic signing of the 'Putrajaya Joint Declaration on ASEAN Post-2015 Priorities Towards an ASEAN Citizen-Centric Civil Service' by the ASEAN Heads of Civil Service

two days ago. This Joint Declaration has identified six areas of cooperation namely, good governance and integrity, capacity building, public sector reform and service delivery, good regulatory practices, efficiency, accountability and participatory approach as well as international networking and partnership. These areas of cooperation will propel the Civil Service to meet the challenges of the post-2015 environment more strategically. The future is bright. By working together, I am confident that we can build a better tomorrow for our Civil Service and our citizens.

7. Another positive outcome of the Retreat worth mentioning is the enhancing of social capital or what we call “friendship” in layman’s term, among the Heads of the Civil Service. I can confidently say that we can now interact on a more personal and informal basis. We can just pick up the phone to call each other or communicate through social media should the need arise.

8. Apart from the Retreat, the ASEAN Civil Service Innovation Conference has provided the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of knowledge to strengthen our Civil Service. The Conference has not only gathered great minds but also showcased innovations and best practices from ASEAN Member States. A total of 14 innovations and best practices were presented. The Conference also highlighted the importance of good governance, citizen engagement and effective service delivery to the ASEAN citizenry.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

9. Sports can play an important role towards creating a People-Oriented, People-Centred ASEAN. The First ASEAN Civil Service Games (ACSG) which involved over 500 participants from all ten ASEAN Member States is indeed a remarkable and significant achievement. This pioneering effort comprising five sports – golf, bowling, badminton, table tennis and futsal - is

indeed a miniature SEA Games. The ACSG is also remarkable in the sense that no other regional bloc has ever organised an event like this, where we are able to gather the best civil servants from all ten ASEAN member states to compete in five different sports. It has strengthened the bonding and solidarity among ASEAN civil servants. It is often said that “sports serve society by providing vivid examples of excellence”. Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better, which serves as a reminder for civil servants to go the extra mile in serving the people.

10. Currently, the biennial SEA Games is the only platform for ASEAN Member States to come together and celebrate the spirit of sport, solidarity and friendship of ASEAN among its citizens. ASEAN has even considered fielding a combined football team in future World Cup competitions. Looking at the popularity, success and impact of sports, we need to capitalise on the power of sports in building and strengthening networking among ASEAN civil servants.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. After the hectic four-day programme, this Gala Dinner provides a well-deserved break and it is now time for us to sit back, relax and enjoy the evening. The organisers have lined up a variety of cultural performances that showcase the rich and diverse Malaysian culture, as well as ASEAN’s diversity. I hope you will savour the Malaysian cuisine while being entertained to a night of dance and music.

12. Hosting this three-in-one programme is certainly not an easy task and would not have been possible without the dedication and support of every one of you here. While it is not possible to list individuals involved in making the programme a success, nevertheless I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Conference on Civil Service Matters (ACCSM), as well as our local Ministries and Agencies such as the Prime Minister’s Department, Public Service Department, the Malaysian Civil Service Sports Council (MAKSAK), Razak School of Government, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysian Armed Forces, the Royal Malaysia Police, and not forgetting the sponsors of the Games.

13. I would like to wish all delegates of the Retreat and Conference, as well as participants of the Games, all the very best in your future endeavours. To the winners of the Games, I offer my congratulations. And to all others, I hope you will bring home beautiful memories of your time here, and have a safe journey home.

Thank you.

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