

Speech by H.E. Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, at the Opening of the 18th ASEAN Summit

Jakarta, 7 May 2011

With a deep feeling of gratitude to the Almighty Lord, for his Generosity, on this historic day, we have been granted this opportunity to gather here at the opening ceremony of the 18th ASEAN Summit.

On behalf of the people, and Government of the Republic of Indonesia, permit me to greet to Indonesia, their Excellencies Heads of States and Heads of Governments of friendly States, who have traveled from the ASEAN region. Your Excellencies' presence today demonstrates the close relations between our countries in our region. It is my sincere hope that your presence today will serve as historic momentum for greater future cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 18th ASEAN Summit convened this year possesses an important meaning for us in facing the new challenges and produce the solutions necessary.

In the beginning of the 21st century, we face many complex, various and transnational challenges. The shifting of geopolitical powers continues to unfold in a dynamic manner.

Various challenges in traditional security continue to haunt us as non-traditional security issues also arise.

The global economic fluctuations that have occurred also deeply impact all nations.

No doubt, it becomes more difficult to differentiate these issues from domestic, regional and global issues.

So too are the bilateral issues and multilateral issues. For that matter, we cannot face these challenges merely at the national level, but instead produce solutions that are more comprehensive, and cooperation that are more intense amongst countries in the South East Asian region.

We need to continue enhance cooperation between nations, be it intra regional and inter regional and also set at the global forums

History recalls that as one of the pioneers of regional integration in the world, ASEAN was established based on the strong desire to establish peace, building Consensus, promoting stability, through regional cooperation and integration.

We realize that to ensure peaceful and stable East Asia region, we must ensure stability and security in our region.

ASEAN is responsible to responding to dynamic conflict that may influence the image of ASEAN and sustainable peace in our region. If conflict occurs, ASEAN must be capable of facilitating a forum for diplomacy and open dialogue with the intent of attaining common peace.

All these efforts, we have outlined in the blue print for ASEAN Political Security. It becomes our responsibility to act upon these commitment and agreements we have agreed upon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this moment and the way forward, we are faced with the challenges of food security and energy security.

In this global situation, the world population is expected to grow fast from seven billion and will reach nine billion by 2045. Nations on this Earth will face a competitive situation for the scarce resources of daily needs.

The competition for energy, for food, and for clean water will become part of the global competition.

We need not to forecast what would happen in ten or twenty years in the future, we are already facing food and energy price fluctuations that attend to continue rising globally.

Food security will be a great challenge for ASEAN. For that reason, we will need clear and evident cooperation amongst ASEAN, with a special emphasis on programs on securing food supply for the people. One of the quick responses that we must take is, establishing an ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework that is comprehensive, particularly in research and development, and also investment in food security. More specifically, we must attend to the formulation of a food reserves system in ASEAN and also one that assist farmers from escaping poverty.

Just as important in overcoming food security is the need to ensure energy security. The challenge we face is producing an innovative solution. Sources of new and renewable energy is greatly needed, to increase the available supply of energy sources, reducing energy consumption that negatively impacts the environment.

Furthermore, the application of renewable energy and the implementation of the program of ASEAN Energy Efficiency and Conservation, should promote the economic and social development in countries in ASEAN.

ASEAN needs to strengthen cooperation on renewable energy sources and alternative energy, including hydro-power and geo-thermal. One way to achieve that is the development of research centers and renewable energy in our region.

We must give serious attention and take concrete measures to address the soaring of food prices and world energy, which in turn will negatively affect the prosperity of our people. History shows that the rise of food and energy prices usually cause has always caused the increase in the number of people living in poverty. Yet we know very well that decreasing the poverty level is not an easy task.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Beside food and energy problem, we are well aware of the continuing armed conflicts in various part of the world. Conflict in Libya is not yet ended. Political turmoil in the Middle East is persisting, compounded by the spread of violence. In international waters, hijacking and piracy are getting critical. And we are also confronted by the international crime syndicates and terrorism.

We have just passed the period of global economic and financial crisis that has yet to recover. At the same time, we have to deal with the climate change problem that has been causing damages in littoral and island states, and other countries. We can no longer argue that human migration in large number continues to take place, irregularly and illegally, so that it creates many political, social, security problems, not only in countries of destination, but also in transit countries.

Other serious challenge is concerning disaster striking quite frequently in our region. We realize that our region is prone to disaster. An example of this is the earthquake and tsunami that struck the eastern part of Japan just two months ago. Thousands of people

perished and unaccounted loss of property and infrastructure. That reminds us of the tsunami that devastated Aceh seven years ago where thousands of people lost their lives and huge material loss.

In tackling natural disaster, I am of the view that two main points should be considered.

First, we must enhance the capacity and coordination at the regional level, through the establishment of ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre).

And second, we must intensify joint exercise in disaster management, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief in Manado in March, jointly chaired by Indonesia and Japan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What I just explained is only an illustration of the present state of the world. And that is the portrait of our region at present. In the world like this, the ASEAN countries just cannot stay idle. We must enhance a multidimensional cooperation both internally among ASEAN members and our cooperation with our dialogue partners as well as with countries from other region. And more than that, ASEAN must be responsive to the reality that continues to change. We must be able to resolve and overcome the challenges as well as to seize the opportunities available within and outside our region.

Having this in mind, as the Chair of ASEAN, Indonesia identifies three main priorities over which we have to exert extra efforts.

First, we have to ensure the attainment of concrete progress in realizing the ASEAN Community.

Second, we have to ensure the maintenance of order and condition in the region favourable for the achievement of development objectives, through East Asia Summit while maintaining the centrality of ASEAN; and

Third, we have to ensure successful discussion on the urgent need for a "post 2015 ASEAN" vision, namely the role of ASEAN Community in a global community of nations. This means that God willing, by the time we achieve an ASEAN Community in 2015, we are well equipped in elevating ASEAN's role to meet the global challenges ahead of us. Delicate challenges for our future generation.

We will work hard to achieve those three priorities, based on the premise that all our endeavours will be of people-centred characteristic. All societies in ASEAN must be engaged, in order to develop sense of ownership and strong will to participate. Our people will be central and they will benefit the most from our initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, under Indonesia's Chairmanship, together we have made meaningful progress in realizing our three priorities as mentioned earlier. In the midst of rapid changes in our regional architecture, I hope our Summit could agree on steps towards the East Asia Summit. We share the hope that the East Asia Summit will make further contributions to the promotion of a stable and peaceful region that brings prosperity to all of us.

In financial sector, one of our achievements is the launching of a joint website involving seven stock exchange from ASEAN member countries. This is aimed at enhancing blue-chip equity in our regional for global investors. This is the first step towards markets connectivity in ASEAN. At the same time, soon we will fully implement credit guarantee and investment

facilities at the amount of US\$700 million. Our Finance Ministers have also joint hands to attain ASEAN Infrastructure Fund in order to support infrastructure development in our region.

Of course, it does not end there. There remains a lot that we have to do and work on together. We must make sure that the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity can be implemented effectively. In this regard, Indonesia is in the process of finishing the Master Plan Percepatan dan Perluasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Indonesia (Master Plan for Acceleration and Expanded Economic Growth of Indonesia/MP3EI), in order to boost the development of six economic corridors in Indonesia. I believe that what Indonesia is planning to do will boost the national economy and intra-Indonesian connectivity, as well as awaken ASEAN's economy and speed up the construction of ASEAN connectivity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the dynamic ASEAN region, in order to elevate the living standard and the people's prosperity, we still have to do a lot of things. We have to work hard to empowering and enhancing small and medium enterprises. We have to further develop intra-ASEAN trade, investment and tourism. And we have to further enhance our cooperation with ASEAN dialogue partners for better benefits.

We need to launch more endeavour to promote people-to-people interaction. The ASEAN Leaders' Dialogue with the ASEAN Interparliamentary Assembly, representatives of Civil Society Organizations and youth representatives within this summit is part of our effort to make ASEAN as an organization that is people-oriented and people-centered. That is our goal. That is our hope. A new hope for the ASEAN Community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding this speech, I have to convey my gratitude and pride, for from this time onward, more and more countries want to enhance their relations and cooperation with ASEAN. This emphasizes that ASEAN has gained more recognition as one of the successful regional organizations in the world. We have gained valuable experience and learned a lot of lessons in the last forty years of our cooperation. Therefore, there are actually a lot of things that we can offer to other regions and nations outside of our region.

Currently, the eyes of the world are directed towards ASEAN, where we grow, develop, and advance together. This reality has to become our inspiration to work even harder; to attain ASEAN Community in 2015, and make the partnership between us more contributive in resolving global issues.

Once again, let us enhance our cooperation. Let us involve our people in building the ASEAN region, so that the lives of the people in this region become more secure, more safe, more peaceful, more harmonious, and more prosperous. Therefore, I truly hope that this year's ASEAN Summit can become a bridge towards the success that we all wish for. Once again, let us realize:

"ASEAN : One Vision, One Identity, One Community".

Thank you.

Wassalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabakatuh

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