

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY SMS DR MALIKI OSMAN  
AT THE 33<sup>RD</sup> ASEAN ROUNDTABLE 2018  
ON 26 NOVEMBER 2018 AT RAFFLES CITY CONVENTION  
CENTRE**

Excellencies, Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning. It is indeed my pleasure to be here, to be able to join the 33<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Roundtable 2018. First, I would like to thank ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute for the invitation, and also for its enduring work that has helped to build mindshare, and underscore the importance of ASEAN to a wider audience. I would also like to congratulate ISEAS on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ASEAN Studies Centre.

2 Today's speech caps off a very hectic, but productive year for me and many of my colleagues. You would have seen many things happening in Singapore – many visitors, many meetings. It was not too long ago when Singapore chose the themes of “Resilience” and “Innovation” for our 2018 ASEAN Chairmanship. The themes reflect our understanding of the challenges and opportunities ahead; and more importantly, the ASEAN spirit of staying united, relevant and forward-looking. Throughout the year, Singapore worked closely with our fellow

ASEAN Members States - we focused on ASEAN Community-building initiatives, and strengthening our linkages with our key partners.

3 I am happy that Singapore launched a number of concrete deliverables that will better prepare ASEAN for the future. I want to emphasise that this would not have been possible without the support of fellow AMS and our key external partners.

### Build a Secure and Rules-Based Region

4 First, let me talk about building a secure and rules-based region. The rise in terrorism and cyber threats continue to threaten our safety, security and social fabric. To address security threats and forge a peaceful and rules-based regional order, we established the “Resilience, Response, and Recovery” framework to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation. The 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting, or ADMM, held in October this year adopted the “Our Eyes” Initiative which aims to enhance strategic information exchange on counter-terrorism. ASEAN Member States are in close discussions on ways to strengthen the region’s information linkages for counter-terrorism through this Initiative. Further to the annual Shangri-La Dialogue’s discussion on regional security and new dimensions of terrorism and counter-terrorism, Singapore also hosted the *2018 Southeast Asia Counter-Terrorism Symposium: A Collective*

*Approach* in October this year. We saw a turnout of about 300 participants and had speakers from government agencies, academic institutions and the private sector. It was heartening to see the strong turnout and active participation of ASEAN Member States in this regional dialogue.

5 On the cyber front, we recognise that as our region becomes increasingly digitalised, the potential for technological disruption caused by cyberattacks increases exponentially. In September, ASEAN Ministers agreed on the need for a formal ASEAN cybersecurity mechanism to coordinate cybersecurity. ASEAN is also the first geographical grouping to have made a strong and open statement in support of the 11 United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Information Security (UNGGE) cyber norms. Closer to home, I am pleased that we have established an ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence to help develop the cybersecurity capabilities of AMS, including through virtual cyber defence training and exercises.

6 The ASEAN defence sectoral has also worked hard to ensure the continued peace and stability of our region. In 2017, the ADMM-Plus adopted the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, or CUES, to promote safety of navigation and overflight for all naval ships and naval aircraft. To complement the need for aviation safety, in October this year, the 12<sup>th</sup> ADMM adopted the

world's first multilateral air guidelines known as the *Guidelines for Air Military Encounters, or GAME*, aimed at managing unintentional encounters between military aircraft. The eight ADMM-Plus dialogue partners – Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States – will have the option of adopting GAME as they did with CUES. The 5th ADMM-Plus has expressed its in-principle support for GAME, and agreed to explore its application by the ADMM-Plus. This reflects the ADMM's leadership in enhancing peace and security in the region. We hope that confidence-building measures like CUES and GAME will help foster mutual confidence and trust among ASEAN and its key partners. As 2018 ADMM Chair, Singapore also facilitated the ADMM's approval for an ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise, which took place off Zhanjiang, China in October this year, and an ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise which will take place in 2019. Such defence cooperation activities with major powers facilitates interoperability and demonstrates ASEAN's standing in the global order.

7 As 'One ASEAN Community', ASEAN also stands ready to help one another. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management, or the AHA Centre, also did good work this year with its quick response to a number of natural disasters that affected AMS. In August, the AHA Centre mobilised relief items from the ASEAN emergency stockpile to provide emergency relief for those affected by the

Lombok earthquake, and in October, the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team, or ERAT, was mobilised in response to the earthquakes and tsunami in Central Sulawesi. The Singapore Armed Forces also delivered humanitarian supplies to Central Sulawesi via two RSAF C-130 aircraft. In September, the AHA Centre also provided relief items to 92,000 people who had been displaced by Typhoon Mangkut, and mobilised the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team again to provide information support to the Philippines. This year, we really have seen ‘One ASEAN, One Response’.

### Brought Our Economies Closer; Boosted Global Partnerships

8 We also brought our economies closer and boosted global partnerships. How did we do that? ASEAN took important steps towards furthering our regional economic integration efforts. This is ever more important today, when the global consensus on free trade, economic integration and globalisation, is fraying. The problem is that the fruits of free trade have not been shared equally. Combined with the ongoing narrative of “the Asian Century” and “the rise of the East”, some have concluded that the welfare gains that would have otherwise accrued were “flowing elsewhere”. Free trade has become an easy target, a scapegoat for these frustrations. Brexit and the ongoing US-China trade tensions are but the most prominent manifestations.

9 For ASEAN, our response has been to reaffirm our commitment to the free, open and rules-based multilateral trading system; and put in place tangible measures to ensure that the benefits percolate to our people, and that our people stay relevant. Recognising the need for strong economic linkages given the global uncertainty, substantial progress was made this year in the negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP. The parties are committed to concluding the Agreement, which will become the world's largest trading bloc with ASEAN at its centre, by 2019. It is our hope that the RCEP will have significant improvements over the existing ASEAN Plus One FTAs<sup>1</sup>.

10 In addition to RCEP, ASEAN is also striving to establish more FTAs with its other regional dialogue partners. With the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA) serving as a strategic pathfinder, we hope to make progress in negotiations for the ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement (AEUFTA). As ASEAN-China Country Coordinator from 2015-2018, Singapore also helped to strengthen ASEAN's economic linkages through the update of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA). ASEAN will continue to deepen economic cooperation with China by fully implementing the ACFTA Upgrade Protocol. We look forward to playing a constructive role in deepening the

---

<sup>1</sup> ASEAN has existing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with six dialogue partners (China, Japan, Republic of Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand)

ASEAN-EU relationship as we take on the role of ASEAN-EU Country Coordinator from 2018-2021.

11 Within ASEAN, we finalised agreements on the ASEAN Single Window, the ASEAN-wide Self-Certification scheme and ASEAN E-Commerce, which would facilitate cross-border flows of goods and services within ASEAN. Consumers can now look forward to more robust consumer protection for e-Commerce transactions. Businesses based in the region are well-positioned to take advantage of the expected increase in intra-ASEAN trade.

### Established the ASEAN Smart Cities Network

12 To ensure that our people and infrastructure stay relevant, as part of Singapore's 2018 Chairmanship, we established the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, or ASCN, which will provide ASEAN's external partners, as well as the private sector, with a platform for meaningful and win-win collaboration opportunities with ASEAN cities. We have since developed action plans for the 26 pilot cities and secured 33 partnerships in a short span of seven months. The key objective is to make use of technology and build on each other's experience to create innovative urban solutions that will bring tangible improvements to our peoples' lives. I am happy that our external partners are equally

committed to this cause and have worked with our cities on several mutually beneficial projects.

13 To ensure the continuity of the ASCN, the ASEAN Smart Cities Framework was recently adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 33<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit. The Framework is a broad, non-binding document that first articulates ASEAN's definition of a "smart city"; two, outlines its key principles; and three, identifies outcomes. There is also ongoing work to develop a monitoring and evaluation or M&E framework to ensure there is proper follow-up on project implementation. While Singapore will no longer be Chair of ASEAN next year, we have expressed our willingness to help shepherd the ASCN beyond 2018 by working closer with successive Chairs to enhance smart city projects. Separately, I am also delighted that Thailand has indicated that it would convene ASCN meetings in July and September 2019.

### Invested in Our Future Generations

14 Closest to our hearts is what we have done to invest in the future of ASEAN. With almost 1 in 3 persons in ASEAN being a youth, our youth hold the key to securing the future prosperity of the region. To this end, Singapore renewed the Singapore-

ASEAN Youth Fund<sup>2</sup> with a S\$5 million top-up over 5 years to support more ground-up initiatives by ASEAN youth and to facilitate greater interaction among the youth in ASEAN. We have also launched the ASEAN Youth Fellowship (AYF), which is an annual programme to develop a network of young leaders in the region who can catalyse change and positively influence a wider ASEAN Community. We gathered 40 young ASEAN leaders for the inaugural AYF earlier this month, where they discussed how innovation can improve sectors such as healthcare and infrastructure. Events such as eSports and music festivals also help promote camaraderie amongst our youths.

15 For 51 years, ASEAN has banded together to overcome challenges that come our way. Through cooperation within and across various sectorals, we have strengthened ASEAN unity and centrality, advanced ASEAN's interest at international fora, and this camaraderie has evolved to become part of our DNA. Collectively, ASEAN possesses a voice that is larger than that of 10 separate nation-states. As they say, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". This makes ASEAN just as relevant today as it was when it first began, if not more so. As Singapore's first Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr S Rajaratnam put it, "If we do not

---

<sup>2</sup> Since the introduction of this Fund in 2007, over 22,000 youths have benefitted in areas such as leadership development, community service and entrepreneurship.

hang together, we will hang separately”. I have touched on some of the key deliverables but they are just a small part of a long list! I think it is safe to conclude that we have taken considerable strides towards a more united, resilient and innovative ASEAN, but we can never be done building an even better ASEAN Community for ourselves and future generations.

### Conclusion

16 ASEAN successfully held more than 1000 ASEAN-related meetings this year, and that shows how hardworking ASEAN is, and this was only possible with the full support of every AMS. Singapore will continue to support the incoming Chair Thailand, and the subsequent ASEAN Chairs’ efforts to manage the challenges ahead, so that we can continue to push ahead and fulfil our common goal of “One Vision, One Identity, One Community”. Thank you.