

**Address by Dr. AKP Mochtan  
Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for  
Community & Corporate Affairs**

**Inauguration of ASEAN Public Relations Network**

2 June 2014

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to the ASEAN Secretariat and I am delighted with the initiative to bring together Public Relations experts and practitioners into an ASEAN-wide network.

It is a very apt timing. In about one and a half years from now, we will witness a major landmark for ASEAN: the establishment of the ASEAN Community on Dec 31, 2015.

This will be an important milestone, but not a destination. ASEAN integration will continue to build and expand on its foundation, and bring our communities closer, in all areas of our lives. What we are delighted with this continuing integration is the creation of opportunities for our people, our communities, and our economies.

We are already witnessing that integration every day. We enjoy meals from different ASEAN countries regularly, we also visit each other's cities a lot more these days, so much so that our regional airlines are doing so well, that they are among the biggest purchasers of aircraft in the world today. If you need a bit more convincing, just visit the airport on the eve of Public Holidays, eve of long weekends, and even normal weekends. Just make sure you set aside enough time, because you may end up spending more time on the road, than traveling between cities or countries.

While making great progress in our physical and people-to-people connectivity, ASEAN continues to face challenges in conveying key messages of the ASEAN community to the people. A survey that we conducted recently reveals that the ASEAN name is well-known. However, about 70% of those surveyed did not have clear understanding on how they may fully benefit from and participate in the ASEAN integration process.

The Secretariat is now developing a communication master plan that will sharpen our communication strategies in conveying ASEAN key messages across the region.

Against this backdrop, PR practitioners and advisers can play a critical role in providing advice for effective communication and messaging to the public. One of the key objectives of ASEAN community building is fostering "One Identity" among all. Attractive, effective public relations will certainly be needed to expedite realization of this intent.

Since the ASEAN community embraces the 10 ASEAN Member States, I would like to underline the importance for a sound, ASEAN-wide network of PR experts, practitioners, and institutions. I therefore look forward to greater synergy-building, sharing of best practices which will all lead to heightened, more effective PR activities about ASEAN for the benefits of our citizens.

I wish you every success and look forward to your active contribution through your respective activities.

Thank You.