

**Keynote Speech by
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**“Facing a Cascade of Transformation
in ASEAN Public Relation Network ”**

Jakarta, 3 June 2014

Yth. Ibu Prita Gani Kemal, Director of London School of Public Relation,
Distinguished Public Relation (PR) practitioners
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me extend my gratitude and appreciation to the London School of Public Relation (LSPR) for inviting me at the 1st ASEAN Public Relations Conferences which gathers distinguished Public Relation (PR) practitioners and experts from ASEAN Member States. This conference proves our continuous efforts to engage various stakeholders in the process of building a people-oriented ASEAN Community.

2. The theme of this conference, “Facing a Cascade of Transformation in ASEAN Public Relation Network”, is certainly relevant with ASEAN’s transformation from a sort of inter-governmental organization in the past into a more people-centered ASEAN. As ASEAN is transforming itself as an ASEAN Community in 2015, the important role of public relations within a people-driven and people-centered ASEAN is eminent. Indeed, this Conference is a great opportunity for us to share some thoughts on the challenges and opportunities ahead of the 2015 ASEAN Community.

3. In the Chairman’s Statement of the 24th ASEAN Summit last month in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, it is mentioned that ASEAN Leaders re-emphasized their continued efforts to move towards a people-oriented ASEAN Community which would ensure the well-being of the peoples of ASEAN. They are

committed to creating an environment which would allow our peoples to participate in and benefit from the process of ASEAN Community building.

4. Since its establishment in 1967, almost 47 years ago, the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has delivered a solid peace and stability to the Southeast Asia countries and become a viable process for regional cooperation. ASEAN has played a crucial role in developing a vast network to promote cooperation in political-security, economic, and socio-cultural sectors.

5. ASEAN has succeeded in overcoming differences and building trust while continuously strengthening cooperation between its members. This would also provide the means for ASEAN to embrace the greater opportunities with other nations, regions and organisations for closer, mutually-beneficial cooperation.

6. The Secretary General of ASEAN in his report to the ASEAN Leaders at the 24th ASEAN Summit last month, said:

“Amidst relative peace, stability and economic progress in the region, ASEAN continues its path towards the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015. The region endeavors to achieve this goal while striving to maintain its control role in the evolving regional architecture and strengthening its place and identity in the internal community”

7. In 1997, ASEAN countries shared common vision of an ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in a just, democratic, and harmonious environment, dynamic development and ever closer economic integration and in a community of caring societies, conscious of its ties of history, aware of its shared cultural heritage and bound by a common regional identity.”

8. This vision has initiated a dream to create the ASEAN Community. It has also strengthened our resolve to build ASEAN as a rules-based, a people oriented, people centered and people driven organization. To achieve that purpose, ASEAN cooperation has to bring benefits to its people and focus on the prosperity of the people, and for that it has to be driven by the people.

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9. I wish to take this opportunity to share with you the major developments of ASEAN towards achieving the ASEAN Community by 2015 and its challenges in its 3 pillars.

10. The ASEAN Political Community is committed to ensure an ASEAN Community living in a peaceful, democratic and harmonious environment. Guided by the APSC Blueprint, the APSC designed ASEAN to be rules-based community of shared norms and values. It binds the member states to share the responsibility for the comprehensive security in the realization of cohesive and stable region in light of the continued dynamism of the world at large.

11. The goal of the ASEAN economic integration is the full realization of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), where the region will be transformed into a single market and production base, a highly competitive region, a region of equitable economic development and a fully integrated into the global economy. I believe that ASEAN member countries have been more integrated than before, and this has contributed to a more resilient ASEAN from global economic downturn. The average GDP growth of ASEAN in 2013 was 5.3% and it was predicted that the average ASEAN GDP in 2014 will be 5,6%. This

only indicates that the ASEAN region has been transformed into one of the world economic center of growth, the engine of growth.

12. The AEC can relies on ASEAN's strengths such as the region's strategic location, its vibrant population which is estimated at 600 million, abundant of natural resources and, young work forces, among others. However, much work still needs to be done especially in bridging the development gap between and among the member-states. ASEAN also needs to address the region's poor state of infrastructure which hinders investment and the slow implementation of AEC commitments, to name a few.

13. In the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Pillar, the goals are envisaged to be achieved by implementing concrete and productive actions that are people-centered and socially responsible. ASCC envisages the following characteristics: Human Development, Social Welfare and Protection, Social Justice and Rights, Ensuring Environmental Sustainability, Building the ASEAN Identity, and Narrowing the Development Gap.

14. The ASCC is expected to bring into the people's consciousness on a regional identity. To be able to successfully do this, the people, should first and foremost, have to be able to promote a regional identity and a shared identity. For its part, ASEAN has heavily encouraged closer people-to-people contact by making travel easier through visa-free arrangements, educational exchanges, incorporating ASEAN studies in education curricula, among others. The initiative to create a regional identity, however, cannot be a purely governmental affair but should also start from the grassroots to gain better traction.

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15. The Foreign Minister of Indonesia gives particular emphasize on the realization of the ASEAN Community 2015. He said: “In recognition of the fact that a community cannot simply be legislated or enacted – it is critical that a sense of ownership and participation – relevance even – be vigorously promoted among the peoples of ASEAN. And, at a time when we are constantly reminded of the close linkage between national and regional developments, we need to ensure that conditions conducive to, and consistent with, ASEAN Community be promoted not only in the relations between ASEAN countries but also, within each member country”. It is therefore, this activity that you are conducting now finds its own merit to promote people-to-people contact.

16. In emphasizing the importance of enhancing Strategic Communication of ASEAN messages, the Secretary General of ASEAN said:

“More so than ever, the coming of 2015 has seen a heightened awareness and interest in ASEAN among the private sector, media, civil society, academe and the public in general. However, due to varying levels of awareness and understanding, the concerns and expectations among these sectors have also varied widely. Thus, aside from a general campaign to bolster ASEAN awareness, ASEAN should also focus on strategic communications targeted on key sectors. Greater engagement with media, civil society and youth sectors is critical as they have the networks and technology that ASEAN can tap into to expand the reach of ASEAN messages. The messaging for 2015 should also emphasize on the establishment of the ASEAN Community as comprising the three pillars, to address the misconception that only the ASEAN Economic Community will be established by 2015”.

The Secretary General of ASEAN also said that:

“The sentiment on the impending establishment of the ASEAN Community by 2015 has always been divided. However, it can already be seen and expected that there would be increasing criticism on ASEAN’s perceived and actual shortcomings in its regional integration efforts. Whether valid or not, ASEAN must be able to enter into a wide-ranging public discourse of these issues and challenges. By doing so, ASEAN will have the opportunity to address these criticism directly and assert its arguments and positions consistently”.

He further emphasized that “A frank and straightforward public discourse that invites all sectors of the ASEAN Community will also provide the opportunity to convey ASEAN messages to the public and consult them on ways to enhance ASEAN’s integration efforts. This will dispel the notion of a government-centric ASEAN and will instead affirm our sincere desire to achieve a people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN Community. While intensifying awareness campaigns and targeted communications will contribute to these efforts, ASEAN’s Communication strategy should not avoid tackling criticism and negative setback. It should take advantage of the prospects not only of balancing and informing public opinion but also, and more importantly, allowing for the greater education, inclusion and support of all stakeholders in the discourse of the Community-building process”.

In this regard, efforts made by the LSPR are valuable and should be appreciated.

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17. Promotion of awareness and understanding of ASEAN and our Community building process also need to be further enhanced to garner broad stakeholder support for ASEAN initiatives. I said last night during the inauguration at the ASEC, the 24th ASEAN Summit last month in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, ASEAN Leaders re-emphasized their continued efforts to move

towards a people-oriented ASEAN Community which would ensure the well-being of the peoples of ASEAN. In this regard, they are committed to creating an environment which would allow our peoples to participate in and benefit from the process of ASEAN Community building.

18. At this Summit, President of the Republic of Indonesia emphasized the followings:

FIRST, through ASEAN cooperation, we have been able to build a peaceful and stable region. In the past ten years, we have been steadily transforming ASEAN from an association into a Community. This is indeed a gigantic leap. And as we realize the ASEAN Community next year, we will become a community bound by one vision and one identity.

To this end, we need to continue making progress—a balanced progress evenly shared by the three pillars of ASEAN Community. Our success in achieving this will rest upon our respective contribution and sustained efforts to mainstream the commitment to the Community into national policies.

SECOND, through ASEAN cooperation, we have been able to reduce poverty, to increase GDP and to achieve economic resilience. ASEAN rises to a new level of prosperity.

One challenge ahead for us is to ensure equity in the distribution of prosperity among our peoples. In this regard, we must accelerate the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity by enhancing connectivity at all levels.

Also critical is our aspiration to : double our GDP and halve poverty by 2030. These are two important parts of the *ASEAN Development Goals*—the goals which are open to further aspirations from other ASEAN member countries.

There are reasons why we need to achieve such goals. By achieving these goals, we will make our region more prosperous. In addition, we will achieve more inclusive development and sustainable growth with equity. And, above all, we will make our ASEAN Community a sustainable and enduring achievement.

These *ASEAN Development Goals* become more important in view of the global efforts to agree on a new set of development goals after 2015.

THIRD, through ASEAN cooperation, we have been able to develop a regional architecture based on norms and principles. An architecture which bring our people to a more prosperous society and community.

And FOURTH, we have been able to build a solid legal foundation for our cooperation. A watershed in this effort is the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter. With this charter, ASEAN has transformed itself into a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-driven organization with its own legal personality.

Therefore, we must continue engaging all segments of our society, both nationally and regionally, so we may truly be people-oriented and people-driven”.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

19. I welcome and congratulate the initiative from London School of Public Relation to convene the 1st ASEAN Public Relations Conferences. I believe that this effort will support the ASEAN Community building process and promotes the awareness, the sense of ownership and people's participation particularly among the PR Practitioners as well as various stakeholders in ASEAN Countries.

We wish you a productive discussion.

Thank you.