



AEM CHAIR'S TALKING POINTS (OPENING)

**THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE
ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY COUNCIL
(25TH AECC)**



**25 May 2025
Banquet Hall, Level 3
Kuala Lumpur Convention Center**






OVERVIEW


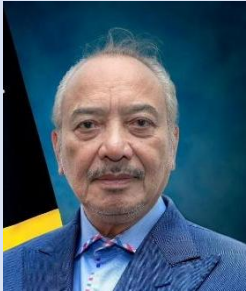
1. Structure of Meeting



- AECC will convene from 8:15 am to 11:45 am on 25 May 2025.
- AECC official group photo session and the ASEAN anthem will be played prior to Opening Remarks by Chair. Session to be facilitated by emcee.
- Navigation of 11 Agenda Items for the 25th AECC and Chair's Talking Points as provided below.

2. List of attending AEM:

MEMBER STATES	AEM Leads
AEM CHAIR 	YB Datuk Seri Utama Tengku Zafrul bin Tengku Abdul Aziz Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM 	YB Dato Seri Setia Mohd Amin Liew bin Abdullah Minister at The Prime Minister's Office And Minister of Finance and Economy II

CAMBODIA 	H.E. Cham Nimul Minister of Trade
INDONESIA 	H.E. Dr. Budi Santoso Minister of Trade
LAO PDR 	H.E. Malaithong Kommasith Minister Of Industry and Commerce
MALAYSIA 	YB Liew Chin Tong Deputy Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry
MYANMAR 	H.E. Dr. Kan Zaw – Not attending Union Minister of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations

PHILIPPINES 	Mr. Allan B. Gepty Undersecretary for International Trade Policy Group (ITG), Department of Trade and Industry
SINGAPORE 	H.E. Gan Kim Yong Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry
THAILAND 	H.E. Pichai Nariphthaphan Minister of Commerce
VIET NAM 	H.E. Nguyen Hong Dien Minister of Industry and Trade
TIMOR-LESTE 	H.E. Fransciso Kalbuadilay Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs and Minister of Tourism and Environment

ASEAN SECRETARIAT 	H.E. DR. KAO KIM HOURN Secretary General of ASEAN
	Mr. Satvinder Singh Deputy Secretary General for ASEAN Economic Community

OPENING REMARKS

Your Excellencies, esteemed AEM colleagues, Indicative AEM of Timor-Leste, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn – Secretary-General of ASEAN, the ASEAN Secretariat, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

- My heartiest welcome to Your Excellencies and delegation to Kuala Lumpur. I am honoured and grateful for the attendance of Your Excellencies in this hall as well as virtually in convening the 25th AECC Meeting. It is good to see everyone again as we were just fresh from meeting each other virtually earlier this week for a series of AEM consultations with our Dialogue Partners namely China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

ASEAN's response to U.S. Reciprocal Tariff Policy

- Indeed, for the past month or so all of us have been occupied with countless analysis as well as calculated measures and actions in addressing the recent shifts in economic posture by the United States

(U.S.) under its current administration. Their key policy directions such as the reciprocal tariff policy; strategic decoupling and supply chain “friend-shoring”; and utilisation of tighter trade enforcement tools, has prompted us to collectively understand, adapt to, and strategically engage with these shifts.

- I am proud to say that ASEAN’s response so far has been measured and wise. Instead of retaliation, we have chosen dialogue and cooperation with a clear commitment among ASEAN Member States (AMS) to not impose retaliatory measures, emphasising that open communication is key to a balanced and sustainable relationship. This prudent stance has already averted escalation and preserved the foundation for engagement between ASEAN, not just with the U.S. but with other major economies as well.
- I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Your Excellencies for your unwavering support and active participation in all of our engagements for the Special AEM Meeting and the series of Special AEM-DP consultations. I look forward to Your Excellencies continuous support as and when we need to convene additional meetings may it be at Caucus level or with our DPs during these uncertain times. At our end, Malaysia as the Chair of ASEAN for 2025 will try our best in steering the right conversations to transpire at the right time, with the right partner economies, for the remainder of this year. At the same time, we also internally need to look into ways to increase intra-ASEAN trade so as to reduce our dependencies towards external partners.

General Flow for the 25th AECC Meeting

Your Excellencies,

- It is expected for our meeting today to be short and sweet. While there will be 11 Agenda Items to be discussed within a span of half a day, I trust the

build-up and progress of almost all of the AEC initiatives which will be updated to us today will be showing positive developments, thanks to the hard work and commitment by our Senior Officials and Sectoral Bodies in implementing the tasks mandated by Ministers. Hence, we can focus more on specific areas or issues that may require the AECC's attention and guidance to make our discourse more efficient today.

- We will also put some emphasis on the items that the AECC will need to endorse for submission to the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) and subsequently to the 46th ASEAN Summit. In this regard, I appreciate Dr. Kao Kim Hourn – Secretary-General of ASEAN and the ASEAN Secretariat in anchoring most of the presentations and status updates for this meeting.

Your Excellencies,

- Before I end my Opening Remarks, I would like to reiterate what I have previously mentioned during the 31st AEM Retreat back in February 2025. Let us be reminded of the values that bind us together as ASEAN: peace, stability, mutual respect, and the determination to ensure a better future for all. ASEAN's journey has never been without challenges, but time and again, we have proven resilient, pragmatic, and forward-looking guided by these values.
- The current economic environment that we're in calls not for retreat, but for renewed resolve. Thus, let us approach our discussions today with an open mind, a spirit of collaboration, and a commitment to advancing our common interests.

- I would also like to welcome Timor-Leste's participation today and in accordance with the Revised Guidelines adopted by the 35th ASEAN Coordinating Council Timor-Leste is invited to engage in today's discussions.

Thank you.