



WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

**YB SENATOR TENGKU DATUK SERI UTAMA
ZAFRUL AZIZ
MINISTER OF INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY
MALAYSIA & AEM CHAIR**

TO BE DELIVERED DURING

GALA DINNER FOR 57TH AEM DELEGATES

ON

24 SEPTEMBER 2025 (WEDNESDAY)

2000 – 2200 HRS

AT

**TAMAN BOTANI PERDANA
KUALA LUMPUR**

PROGRAMME

TIME	PROGRAMME
6.30 – 7.30 pm	Arrival of Delegates
7.30 pm	Arrival of VIPs
7.55 pm	Arrival of YAB Prime Minister
8.00 pm	Opening Cultural Performance
8.05 pm	Welcoming Remarks by AEM Chair
8.10 pm	Key Note Address by YAB Prime Minister
8.20 pm	Commencement of Dinner
	Cultural Performance
9.15 pm	Photo Session
9.25pm	Closing Performance
9.30pm	End of programme

PROPOSED REMARKS

YAB Dato' Sri Anwar bin Ibrahim
The Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia

Excellencies, ASEAN Economic Ministers, and
Ministers from ASEAN Dialogue Partners

His Excellency Dr. Kao Kim Hourn
Secretary- General of ASEAN

My esteemed Cabinet Colleagues

Senior Officials from Malaysia and Invited Countries

Strategic partners of our ASEAN-related events

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, a
warm Malaysia Madani welcome, and a heartfelt
ASEAN hello to all.

1. As the Chair of the ASEAN Economic Ministers, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the Gala Dinner of the 57th ASEAN Economic Ministers' and Related Meetings.

2. I am honoured to have with us, Malaysia's Honourable **Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Anwar Ibrahim**. Sir, we truly appreciate your presence tonight, which undoubtedly elevates this occasion.
3. My heartfelt appreciation to my **ASEAN colleagues, Dialogue Partners**, and the **ASEAN Secretariat** for your unwavering support. And of course, the MITI team, fellow Ministers, Ministries and Government departments, agencies — thank you. Without all of you, we would not have been able to **complete so much from 7 am to 7pm daily – including working lunches – in the past two days**, or to host this evening at our **137-year old Botanical Gardens!** (established since 1888).

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The year 2025 stands as a pivotal juncture for ASEAN. In **a world reshaped by rapid transformation and rising uncertainty, ASEAN**

must demonstrate not only **agility**—but **unity**. Our strength lies in our ability to advance swiftly, yet together. As Chair, Malaysia's theme of Sustainability and Inclusivity serves as a guiding compass — an invitation to **navigate complexity with clarity**, and **change with cohesion**.

5. This is not merely a slogan, but a strategic commitment: Malaysia's **18 Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs)** help ensure ASEAN is not only **future-ready**, but also **future-proof**. After months of productive engagements, I am pleased to share that **most of the PEDs are on track for delivery** by the end of our Chairmanship. These represent real progress for our **businesses, our MSMEs, and our people**.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. The outcomes of our meetings and engagements over the past nine months give us reason to be optimistic. Despite global headwinds, ASEAN has

outpaced and continues to **outperform the world economy – in key metrics such as GDP (~4.2% in 2025), and FDI inflow (+8.0% to USD226 billion in 2024).**

7. With **680 million people, a growing middle class, a digitally savvy and young population**, ASEAN is also fast becoming one of the most dynamic markets in the world – clearly a promising island amid today’s stormy economic ‘sea’.
8. But we must continue to **address vulnerabilities – by developing our industries’ capacity, harmonising regulations, generating more intra- and ex-ASEAN trade and empowering our people.**
9. **To our Dialogue Partners, thank you for walking this journey with us.** In a world beset by uncertainties, it is **comforting to know that “you will never walk alone”**

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. Before I close, I **warmly welcome the Philippines** as the next ASEAN Chair. **Malaysia stands ready to support you** in advancing the ASEAN agenda. And don't worry — we will happily share our experience, lessons, and delicious food recipes.
11. May our friendship tonight remind us that when ASEAN stands together, **no challenge is too great, and no dream too distant.** On that note, I would once again like to thank all distinguished guests for joining us this evening, particularly our Honourable Prime Minister.
12. To my counterparts within ASEAN and from our Dialogue Partners, **may our firm friendship be like the Mekong** — flowing across many lands but the waters still immersing as one. And **may our strength be like the durian — spiky on the outside, but rich and rewarding within.**

13. I wish you all a delightful evening, good health, as well as sweet, lasting memories from Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia. Terima kasih. Thank you.