



**Statement by Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Munir Abdul Majid,
Chairman of ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) Malaysia
at the ASEAN@50 Media Briefing & Luncheon**

*Tuesday, 11th July 2017 | 12.30PM
Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur [Majestic 7 on Level 4]*

ASEAN NEEDS TO BE MORE DYNAMIC AND REALISTIC

As ASEAN reaches 50 and looks ahead, it needs to become more dynamic and realistic in a global environment which is getting ever more challenging and is being transformed by rapidly changing technology. Even if ASEAN is not capable of overhauling the way its decisions are made, it must get clearer and sharper on the issues confronting the region.

In this regard, I would like to put forward two specific proposals which I hope one or more ASEAN governments can champion, particularly our own government.

- 1. Set up an ASEAN Youth Council (AYC) to deliberate over the course of ASEAN's 51st year on what kind of ASEAN they want for the future.** We often note positively on ASEAN's population of 60 per cent under the age of 35, but their involvement in its decisions and for the future of the region has been limited. The ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) has, to its credit, been behind the formation of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council (AYEC), leading to the establishment of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Association, but there needs to be a more broad-based involvement of ASEAN youth than just in business entrepreneurship, especially when it comes to the future shape, character and policies of the regional organization.

The AYC could comprise of 5-7 representatives from each ASEAN member state and the 50-70 member Council could be presided over by an experienced hand, maybe a respected former Secretary-General of ASEAN. The views expressed at the sessions could be structured into a set of proposals for ASEAN's future which could be moderated by more experienced ASEAN personalities, but must be made public, before submission to ASEAN leaders. This process would enhance the sense of ownership in ASEAN's future among the population to whom that future belongs.

- 2. Draft an ASEAN Social and Education Policy document** which addresses directly the opportunities as well as challenges of digitization of the economy. This is the sweeping

change that will affect all economies but for which not all member states of ASEAN are prepared. The impact of robotization, the internet of things, use of big data and so on is going to be tremendous; on employment, education and training, and on retraining. The reliance on low cost manufacturing for growing populations is increasingly becoming a story of the past. The displacement of employment could become severe. Individual ASEAN states' preparation for this future is not enough as stresses and strains in the restructuring of economies will adversely affect ASEAN integration and cohesion. ASEAN countries ahead of the curve in preparing for the digital economy need to take the lead in preparing this policy document to map that future for ASEAN.

Next year Singapore, the leader of the digital economy in ASEAN, takes the chair of the regional organization, and there are indications that digitization will be made one of the major items on the ASEAN agenda. This is good, but it should be built on to come up with a robust policy document for ASEAN as a whole.



**ASEAN-BAC MALAYSIA'S
ASEAN@50 CONFERENCE AND
COMMEMORATIVE DINNER & ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

The Conference on 4th August at Bank Negara Malaysia's Sasana Kijang will only be able to highlight and touch on the above ASEAN issues which would need ASEAN governmental pursuit. The hope is that such discussion will be followed up by the many ASEAN@50 events that are being organized this year.

The Conference and Dinner will be attended by 500 delegates and 600 guests respectively; not just from Malaysia, but from the ASEAN region and beyond. Delegates who truly represent the private sector – the MSMEs, the SMEs, the MNCs, the women, the youth and the man-in-the-street.

The Conference will have two panel discussions, at which what young people want of ASEAN and the digitization of the economy will be addressed. Other issues will also have to be touched upon, such as the mentoring programme for SMEs across ASEAN, which is being championed

by the Philippines as the Chair of ASEAN this year. ASEAN-BAC Malaysia will be active in supporting initiatives by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), such as the ASEAN Circle, which is intended to raise the level of appreciation of ASEAN.

The Commemorative Dinner on 4th August, which will be graced by the Prime Minister, is a major celebration of ASEAN, organized by ASEAN-BAC Malaysia as the leading economic pillar-private sector body.

At the Dinner, 10 outstanding Malaysian-based companies and individuals who are a testament of the success and opportunities which ASEAN has to offer, will be presented with the ASEAN-BAC Malaysia's ASEAN@50 Achievement Awards. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak will be presenting the Awards to the celebrated recipients, continuing the tradition established from our previous years' award events.

We look forward to highlighting exemplary organisations and individuals in 10 categories; Lifetime Achievement Award, Golden Jubilee Award, Woman Entrepreneur Award, Young Entrepreneur Award, SME Entrepreneur Award, Digital & Tech-based Business Award, as well as SME Excellence Awards in Corporate Social Responsibility, Employment, Growth, and Innovation.

We believe many Malaysian individuals and organisations already exemplify some of the region's best-in-class corporate standards, setting the benchmark for other Malaysians to emulate. At the ASEAN@50 Commemorative Dinner, we will highlight and celebrate these deserving captains of the industry.

We invite individual and organizations to join us in the celebration. For more information on the events, please visit www.aseanbac.com.my.



About ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) Malaysia

ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) is mandated by ASEAN Leaders to provide private sector feedback and guidance to boost ASEAN's efforts towards economic integration since 2003.

ASEAN-BAC's Council Members are appointed by the Ministers in charge, and comprise of high-level CEOs of companies from each member country.

ASEAN-BAC Malaysia is represented by its 3 members: Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Munir Abdul Majid, Datuk Farid Alias and Dato' Ramesh Kodammal.



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