

SUMMARY:
Realizing the Potentials of ASEAN-Turkey Partnership
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1. Turkey signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) on 23 July, 2010. As you know, the Philippines has the honor of being the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year. We hosted the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the organization last 8th August. It was on that same occasion that Turkey became ASEAN's fourth Sectoral Dialogue Partner.

2. The Philippines has benefited from its partnership with Turkey. Your country has provided active support for the peace talks with the MNLF and MILF and was one of the biggest donors of assistance to the victims of Yolanda, the world's worst hurricane that hit our country. We find much complementariness between Turkey and each of our ten member-states—in history, national interests, cultural values and common aspirations. This convergence that binds us bodes well for lasting cooperation and commitment to a shared future.

3. ASEAN is a grouping of ten member-states that value their independence and sovereignty, all of them having suffered domination by the big powers. It is no surprise, therefore, that in ASEAN, we jealously guard against external interference in our domestic affairs. Like Turkey, we value our national freedoms and, at the same time, appreciate the need for modernization and global cooperation. This is a shared legacy from our great founders, enunciated in the 19th century by Dr. Jose Rizal, national hero of the Philippines, in the early 20th century by your great leader, Mustafa Kemal

Ataturk, and in 1967, reiterated by most of the founding fathers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations: Sukarno of Indonesia, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, Abdul Rahman of Malaysia, and Kittikachorn of Thailand.

4. ASEAN countries have a population of more than 627 million people and a combined GDP of \$2.6 trillion. ASEAN has signed six free-trade agreements with other regional economies.

5. ASEAN has contributed to regional stability by building much-needed norms and fostering an environment to address shared challenges. The ASEAN is not a military organization. It is not mandated to solve disputes but to manage them. Throughout its fifty years of history, there has been no major armed conflict among member-states. The grouping is committed to peace, prosperity and stability and has adopted instruments that call for non-violent means of resolving conflict: Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN), Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ), Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Declaration of Conduct among Parties to the South China Sea (DOC). In its last summit, the foreign ministers have adopted the Framework for the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

6. According to the Asian Development Bank, ASEAN's greatest success has been in tariff reduction. On average, 96% of its members' tariff lines are at 0%. This share is expected to reach 98.67 by 2018. The new AEC Blueprint 2025 provides measures for raising productivity through innovation, technology and human resource development. It also aims at more inclusiveness in the integration process and support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

7. All the ASEAN member-states as well as Turkey were signatories to the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank and supported the Belt and Road Initiative of China. These opportunities for accelerating inter-regional economic progress reflect fundamental shifts in global leadership and security and economic architecture.

8. The Turkish Government could share its 30-years of experience in PPP legal and institutional framework. Cooperation in e-commerce can be initiated in the areas of payment systems, logistics and customs, and for training on online markets and products sale for SMEs.

9. In research and development, partnerships and exchange could be initiated on specific fields such as mining investments. Disaster health management is another sector that could be explored. As the 6th most visited holiday destination in the world with 40 million international tourists, Turkey can also support ASEAN's capacity-building program in tourism development.

10. Turkey has much to contribute to the cultural projects of ASEAN. The Turkish example as a multicultural and multi-religious country can help in enhancing ASEAN's sense of community and its identity as a melting pot of civilizations and cultural and religious traditions.

11. The proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement covers the ten ASEAN member-states and six trade agreement partners that include China, Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and India. It was initiated by ASEAN and endorsed by China, The RCEP is strategically important because it accounts for almost half of the world's population, almost 30 percent of the global domestic product, and over a quarter of the world's exports. It is also projected to reach a combined domestic product of \$22.7

trillion. It will bolster our joint goal of expanding markets and participate in productive trade based on specialization and comparative advantage. The comprehensive network will not only hasten ASEAN economic integration but will also institute open regionalism with Turkey.

12. Close cooperation between ASEAN, the seventh largest economy in the world and the fourth largest trading entity, and Turkey, the 17th largest economy and the 6th largest in Europe, presages a bright future in Asia. This ideal bilateral relationship between partners located in the middle of strategic sea routes is a formula for success, The potential benefits are limitless, if both parties employ a strategic approach for unlocking the opportunities.

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