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**Welcome Statement by His Excellency Mr. Kasit Piromya  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand  
at the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting  
Phuket, Thailand, 20 July 2009**

Your Excellency Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand  
Your Royal Highnesses,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In August 1967, Thailand hosted the first ASEAN Ministerial Meeting which was attended by the Foreign Ministers of Five Southeast Asian Countries. The first AMM led to the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration of 8 August 1967 announcing the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Thailand is today once again proud to host the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Phuket. Over the next few days, Thailand will host Foreign Ministers from twenty seven countries or organisations who will participate in our discussions on important regional and global issues affecting this region. We are also honoured to welcome with us today our distinguished colleagues from Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste who are attending our Meeting as Guests of the Host. We hope that you will be able to achieve fruitful discussions during your stay here.

On behalf of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and Special Guests present today, allow me to express our appreciation to His Excellency Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, for honouring us with your presence at our Opening Ceremony today. Since July last year when Thailand assumed the Chairmanship of ASEAN, Your Excellency has led our collective efforts at many international fora and summits, and we are extremely grateful for your dedicated leadership and determination throughout this period.



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Mr. Chairman,

I think the annual ASEAN Ministerial Meetings are the opportune time for ASEAN to reflect among our past achievements and to review our challenges. This era of globalization and interdependence has necessitated the need for us to explore avenues to further strengthen our cooperation and reinforce our resiliency. Events have occurred that serves as obstacles to our march for greater prosperity and have tested our will and determination. The effects of the on-going economic and financial crisis, the spread of Influenza A (H1N1), issues of climate change and environment, all need our urgent attention and action. These are some of the issues that the foreign ministers will debate over the next few days. Never before in the more than 40 years of ASEAN association have we as a region been faced with such challenges that threaten to tear at the very fabric of ASEAN society.

Without further ado, it is now my great honour and privilege to invite His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand to offer us his insights and to officially open the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and Post Ministerial Conferences.

Thank you.

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