

PRESS RELEASE

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Thailand's view on achieving the goal of ASEAN Community in 2015

In achieving the goal of an ASEAN Community in 2015, efforts should be made to make ASEAN a community of action, of connectivity, and of the region's peoples, said Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva of Thailand in his opening remarks before the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting today in Phuket.

“ASEAN must be able to act decisively and in a timely manner to address both internal and external threats and challenges to the security and welfare of its Member States and peoples.”

“When there is an emergency somewhere within our region or beyond and a request is made for assistance, ASEAN must be able to effectively respond as a group and in a timely manner”, said the Prime Minister.

Making ASEAN a Community of Connectivity, he said, could be achieved through improving both ASEAN's infrastructure such as transportation linkages, and harmonization of relevant rules and regulations governing region-wide transportation, and trade and investment.

For instance, ASEAN must be visa-free within the region and offer an ASEAN Single Visa for those outside the region, he said.

“Only through a well-connected Community can we realize our full economic potentials as well as take maximum advantage of our strategic location linking the massive economies of South Asia and our West and Northeast Asia to our North”, said Mr. Vejjajiva.

Meanwhile, Community of Peoples, he explained, referred to a community whereby the peoples of ASEAN Member States were indeed beneficiaries of the various areas of ASEAN cooperation.

“The peoples of ASEAN are the region's most important resources. We need to ensure that they have equitable access to human development opportunities. Regional integration will succeed only if our peoples contribute to, and benefit from it”, he said.

Full version of the statement by the Prime Minister can be downloaded at www.mfa.go.th or www.42ammpmc.org

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