

REMARKS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASEAN-IPR

**ASEAN-IPR REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE ON
PEACE & TOLERANCE:
Building Unity and Common Understanding
In Countering Intolerance and Violent Extremism**

**19 October 2018
Jakarta, Indonesia**

Her Excellency, Retno Marsudi, *Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia*,

Excellencies, Distinguished Speakers, Youth Participants,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

1. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation is happy that you have taken the time to attend this opening ceremony of this Youth Conference.

2. For us, this initiative is more than just a measure to implement the Terms of Reference and Three-Year Work Plan of the Institute. Indeed, it is an effort that springs from our personal and collective commitment to a cause we have embraced: the cause of peace and reconciliation in our region and beyond – in **our time** and beyond.

3. The work of the Institute is worthy of our best creative efforts and the support of all stakeholders. Your presence here is a demonstration of such support. This goes especially for the youth participants – who travelled all the way to Jakarta – because this

is essentially a Conference of the youth, for the youth and by the youth.

4. I highly commend the Government of Indonesia, its Representative to the ASEAN-IPR Governing Council and her team for spearheading this initiative. My appreciation also goes to the government of the Republic of Korea for their support to this endeavour.

Dear Youth Participants,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

5. As we know, there are rising incidents where youths were driven to commit acts of violence, as a result of holding extremist views. It has also been widely observed that extremist groups actively use social media to recruit new followers and to raise funds for terror activities. No single country in the region is immune from such danger. ASEAN has therefore been at the forefront, as part of its Community-building efforts, to address these issues.

6. A concerted effort and comprehensive approach that makes use of innovative ways of countering the challenge of violent extremism is urgently needed – including participation of youth organisations in this region, together with governments of ASEAN Member States. The youth ought to take part as the driving force to develop and promote narratives of peace, tolerance and pluralism through various platforms, including the social media.

7. However, it is not enough to say, “the voices of the youth must be heard.” The youth must also be encouraged to speak. Their ideas must be sought because the youth of today have a perspective that can help address the fundamental challenges of our time.

8. They must be provided with a platform for expression of their ideas so that they can join in the constructive debates that lead to wise policies. They must be helped to form self-sustaining and mutually supporting networks engaged in the pursuit of peace based on tolerance and mutual respect.

Dear Youth Participants,

9. Let me conclude, by quoting the first Indonesian President, Soekarno, who said, “*a **thousand old men can dream, but a youngster could change the world!***” Therefore, in Soekarno’s words, I urge you – our Youth participants – “*aim as high as the sky... should you fall, you fall amongst the stars!*”

Thank you, have a fruitful discussion, and HAVE FUN!
