



REMARKS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASEAN-IPR
VIRTUAL LEARNING EXCHANGE BETWEEN ASEAN-IPR AND
PHILIPPINES HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)/
(VIRTUAL) UNIVERSITY TOUR

Monday, 6 June 2022

Your Excellency, Secretary Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., Philippines' Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity,

Your Excellency, Undersecretary Isidro L. Purisima, Deputy Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity; Representative of the Philippines to the ASEAN-IPR Advisory Board; and our gracious host this morning,

Excellencies, Members of the ASEAN-IPR Governing Council, Advisory Board and ASEAN Women for Peace Registry,

Distinguished Representatives from Commission on Higher Education, Academes, Lecturers and Dear Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Magandang umaga! A very good morning to everyone.
2. It's a pleasure and a real privilege for the ASEAN Institute for Peace & Reconciliation to be able to interact with all of you today.
3. I would like to express my highest regards and appreciation to the Philippines' Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU) for this excellent and exciting initiative.
4. This Virtual Learning Exchange between ASEAN-IPR and Philippine Higher Education Institutions had been inspired by a concept

which was also initiated by the Philippines – namely the ASEAN-IPR University Tour.

5. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation – or ASEAN-IPR – was established in 2012 to be the ASEAN institution for research activities on peace, conflict management and conflict resolution.

6. With such mandate, the Institute carries out five (5) functions – research, capacity building, pool of expertise and support for ASEAN bodies, networking, and dissemination of information.

7. With such functions, the ASEAN-IPR's establishment was based on the notion of positive peace – which is peace that is defined not only by the absence of war or conflict, but the characterised through sustainable investment in development and institutions, as well as societal attitudes that cultivate peace.

8. Such notion is then reflected through our motto – **forging and fostering peace** – which represent the purpose and endeavour of the Institute to solidify and nurture peace in our region.

9. There are – among others – three key bodies of the ASEAN-IPR: the Governing Council, the Advisory Board and the Executive Director and Secretariat. While the Governing Council acts as the highest decision-making body of the Institute, I would like to highlight the role of the Advisory Board.

10. The Advisory Board consist of ten Members – each appointed and representing an ASEAN Member State. The main task of the Advisory Board is to generate **research priorities for the Institute**. That is why, many of our Advisory Board Members are eminent persons coming from a practical background of scholars, educators, peace advocates and experienced peace practitioners – most of whom are based in ASEAN Member States.

11. In 2017, during the Philippines Chairmanship of ASEAN and ASEAN-IPR, Members of the Advisory Board explored modalities to raise public awareness – pursuant to the Institute's networking and dissemination of information functions.

12. It was the Representative of the Philippines to the Advisory Board who developed the idea for a University Tour – to introduce the ASEAN-IPR, establish linkages/network with relevant academic institutions, reach out and engage with universities, students and faculties, in promoting awareness of our work.

13. The Universities targeted are those actually based in ASEAN Member States – to ensure that we engage with stakeholders at the community level.

14. The University Tour’s idea consisted of two main activities, namely:

- (i). Introduction of the ASEAN-IPR through Seminar/Symposium
- (ii). Setting-up ASEAN-IPR booths in universities to display publications, video presentations, calls for research and/or projects, etc.

15. When this project was endorsed, it was the understanding that the University Tour may be conducted accordingly as seen fit by each Member State – especially since it would be conducted in universities and academic institutions based in ASEAN Member States. Therefore, ASEAN Member States would be the owner and proponent of such activity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. Since the inception of the idea for University Tour, only once had we had the chance to conduct the activity through face-to-face means.

17. In November 2017, the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to ASEAN organised a Seminar on “The Role of ASEAN-IPR in Advancing Peace and Reconciliation in the Region” at the Muhammadiyah University Yogyakarta. The Seminar drew interest from many students, namely those focusing their studies in political science. Discussions were as varied as inter-state and intra-state conflict management and conflict resolution; the understanding of ASEAN’s principle of non-interference and consensus; as well as the role of women and the youths in peace processes.

18. The world came to a screeching halt in 2020, with the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

19. Turning challenges into opportunities, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs collaborated with the University of Indonesia's International Relations Programme to organise a Virtual Public Lecture entitled "the Role of ASEAN-IPR in the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025". This initiative is also pursuant to the University Tour.

20. It is truly encouraging to finally see the initiative being continued by the Philippines – as the initiator of the University Tour concept – through this Virtual Learning Exchange.

21. If there is one message that I would like to share with everyone here today, is that the **ASEAN-IPR is platform for all of you to participate and contribute to sustaining positive peace in the region.**

22. In its 55th year, the biggest challenges of ASEAN for the future are three-folds:

- (i). Continue to maintain and enhance the region's peace and security, taking into consideration the various traditional and non-traditional regional and international issues
- (ii). Continue to maintain and enhance the region's economic resilience and progress; and,
- (iii). Continue to strive towards a people-centred ASEAN.

23. Given the complexity of contemporary threats that ASEAN faces, the responsibility to sustain positive peace rests in all stakeholders → where cross-cutting issues require cross-sectoral actors.

24. Therefore, in any process, it is paramount to ensure not only the inclusivity, but also participation and engagement of all related stakeholders – from the grassroot to the policy-making level.

25. With the guidance from and collaboration with other stakeholders, the youth could have a leading role as peace building and bringing the ASEAN Community forward towards sustainable peace.

26. Through the ASEAN-IPR, in pursuit of its mandate and functions, we are able to increase involvement of the youths in ASEAN to promote

dialogue, understanding and tolerance in a culturally rich and diverse societies.

27. We've conducted a Youth Conference on Peace & Tolerance. We've also designed a module for youths to utilise technology in spreading narratives of peace. We've even invited the creative minds of millennials and Gen Z to create videos that represents the region's harmony in diversity, and write poems that amplifies messages of peace from ASEAN citizens, for ASEAN citizens.

28. The Advisory Board of ASEAN-IPR currently list ten priority research areas. Amongst them are “countering the rise of violent extremism and radicalism”, “the role of local communities, local wisdom and knowledge in peace building”, “the use and impact of information-communication technology (ICT) to peace, reconciliation, conflict management”. These are just a few areas of which I could see the youth taking a pivotal role – or perhaps even leading – in the discourse, research and advocacy.

29. This year, the ASEAN-IPR will be commemorating its first decade of existence. We are excited to fill this year with activities – many of which are youth-oriented.

30. The first is an ASEAN Youth Peace Essay Competition – inviting the youths to recognise and translate their role as agents of peace into action; how they could contribute to maintaining peace and tolerance within their communities; and their hopes on peace and future of the region.

31. A second activity is Compilation of ASEAN Peace Figures – where we invite the youths to compile, profile and publish human interest stories of persons working on the ground on peace building. This is channelled through a series of photo stories that chronicles the various initiatives undertaken by peacebuilders at the community/grassroot level that have yet to be put in the spotlight.

32. You are all invited to participate in these activities. I encourage you to follow our social media and visit our Website to learn more on how you could be a part of our activities.

33. You may also direct message us on social media or email us through the Website – if you have any questions, even have ideas on peacebuilding activities you would like to share.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Participants,

34. With today's engagement, I fervently hope that more of these initiatives could be picked up by other ASEAN Member States to engage and connect with universities and higher education institutions – to share the work of ASEAN-IPR, and collaborate to instil culture of peace in the region.

35. Taking up one in three persons of the demographic in Southeast Asia, the youths are where we will entrust this region to.

36. Despite many trials – most recently the pandemic – history has shown again and again that despite being those deeply affected, the youths continue to adapt with creativity and innovation during challenging times. They have displayed their strength and resilience to break boundaries and give way to new ideas.

37. Remember the ASEAN Anthem, “For Peace, our goal from the very start. And prosperity to last”. We hope today's Learning Exchange would inspire the students, our youths, to embrace the opportunity to contribute in sustaining the region's positive peace.

38. Once again, my appreciation to OPAPRU and the Philippines Advisory Board, for taking this initiative, and giving me a platform to dialogue with all of you.

39. I wish you all the best in continuing the programme and look forward to the exchanges made throughout the day.

40. Maraming salamat po! I thank you!
