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BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

ON THE OCCASION OF

OPENING CEREMONY

EXCHANGE VISIT OF ASEAN COOPERATIVES PERSONNEL AND
LEADERS

27th – 30th May 2013

Centrepoint Hotel, Abdul Razak Complex, Gadong
Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

BISMILLAHIR RAHMAN NIRRAHIM

Head Of Departments, Senior Officials, Other Government Officials, Distinguished Participants Of The Exchange Visit Of ASEAN Cooperatives Personnel And Leaders, Ladies And Gentlemen.

***ASSALAMMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH AND
A VERY GOOD MORNING TO ALL.***

Praise to Allah Subhanahu Wataala, Wassalatu Wassalamu 'ala Sayidina Mauhammadin Wa 'ala alihi Wasahbihi Ajmaien, selawat and salam to our Prophet, Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam.

Alhamdulillah with the gracious blessings of Allah Subhanahu Wataala, we are able to gather here at this beneficial function.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartiest and warm welcome to all the distinguished delegates of the ASEAN Cooperatives Personnel and Leaders and I wish to convey my special 'Selamat Datang', Welcome to Brunei Darussalam, The Abode of Peace.

And I also like to thank the organiser of the Exchange Visit of ASEAN Cooperatives Personnel and Leaders for inviting me to be the Guest of Honour this morning.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brunei Darussalam is honoured to be given the opportunity to host this Exchange Visit Programme this year.

Our presence today shows affirmation of our strong commitment to ASEAN Centre for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives (ACEDAC) and ASEAN Sectorial Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives (ASWGAC). Since its establishment, various strategies and action programmes have been implemented and amongst the activities that have been formulated under the action plan programme is the empowerment of personnel and leaders of agricultural cooperatives in exchange visit activities. I myself was in ACEDAC Working Group before.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Exchange Visit is part of ACEDAC activities under the Strategic Plans of Action (SPA) for the ASEAN Cooperation in Agricultural Cooperatives.

Having organized it in Brunei will meet up into the objective in giving opportunities for delegates from ASEAN member countries, Cooperatives Leaders and Personnel to visit some of Brunei's agriculture cooperatives' business activities and the sharing of information, knowledge and experiences among ASEAN member countries on cooperatives

development. We welcome your kind advise and guidance to improve our cooperatives here in Brunei Darussalam.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Food security and nutrition have become an increasing pressure to global challenge. Just under 870 million persons were recorded undernourished in the years 2010 to 2012 - mostly in developing countries with the majority of them in rural areas. As business models that are responsive to members and to social objectives, cooperatives have a central role to play and has proven to be adaptable to a range of circumstances – from small scale farms depending on their food sovereignty and traditional knowledge to large scale multinational undertaking.

Experiences show that cooperatives organization in our ASEAN member states and also other parts of the world play a major role in agriculture sector, that is in increasing food production, gaining market access for the farmers, obtaining better prices on agriculture inputs, participating more effectively in global value chains and also to manage natural resources and enhancing food security.

I believe the ASEAN cooperatives can become as successful as the internationally well known cooperatives especially in areas of agriculture and fishery. And since food security is always an issue, therefore the opportunity is huge to be exposed.

I would also like to thank the organising committee for making the program a success. To our ASEAN Cooperatives Personnel and Leaders, let me wish you a pleasant and memorable stay in Brunei Darussalam, the Abode of Peace. And, I also wish that this exchange visit, will be of benefit to all in strengthening and developing agricultural cooperatives among our ASEAN countries.

Have a fruitful meeting and do not forget to enjoy the fresh air and the blue sky that we have here in Brunei Darussalam, also to visit the other interesting tourism products.

With the kalimah, ***BISMILLAHIR RAHMAN NIRRAHIM***, I officially declare the Exchange Visit of ASEAN Cooperatives Personnel and Leaders held today in Brunei Darussalam open.

Thank you very much.

***WABILLAHHI TAUFIK WALHIDAYAH WASSALAMUALAIKUM
WAHRAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH***