

48th ASEAN Summit (Plenary) Venue: Ocean Pavilion, Shangri-la Mactan Cebu



VERBATIM TEXT

BY

THE HONOURABLE DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

AT

48TH ASEAN SUMMIT (PLENARY)

8TH MAY 2026

CEBU, PHILIPPINES

President 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr.;

Majesty;

Excellencies.

First, I must express my profound thanks and appreciation for the commendable performance and welcoming ceremony. Very impressive, culturally vibrant, reflects the spirit of people of Cebu and of course in the Philippines.

Thank and congratulate and welcome Prime Minister Le Minh Hung of Vietnam. And again, congratulations to Prime Minister Anutin for the impressive mandate he has obtained and welcome Prime Minister Siphandone of Lao PDR.

The theme '**Navigating our Future Together**' reflects the continuity of our shared vision and the resolve to strengthen ASEAN's unity, resilience and centrality in an increasingly complex global environment.

Now, the escalating crisis in West Asia, the Middle East, compounded by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, continues to threaten global peace, economic stability and supply chains.

The consequences are profound, immediate and far-reaching: energy volatility, rising food insecurity and severe disruptions to supply chains and livelihoods across the region.

They strike at the core of economic stability, social cohesion and daily lives of our people with the poorest and most vulnerable bearing the heaviest burden.

ASEAN continues to call for peace and de-escalation. Prolonged instability could help that could keep energy prices elevated and disrupt global trade routes for many months to come. No single country can manage these disruptions alone. Our response therefore must be collective, coordinated and forward-looking.

In doing so, we should build on the momentum of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration adopted last year, which reaffirmed our shared commitment to strategic autonomy, economic resilience and sustainable growth.

The Declaration recognised that energy security, food resilience, supply chain stability and stronger regional connectivity are now strategic imperative, not merely sectoral concerns.

It reminded us that ASEAN centrality must be preserved through practical cooperation that allows our region to remain open, inclusive and resilient amid growing geopolitical fragmentation.

In this regard, I also welcome the Leader's statement and its priority actions across all ASEAN community pillars to strengthen our collective resilience.

Your Majesty, Excellencies,

Malaysia fully supports accelerating the implementation of the ASEAN Framework on Petroleum Security Agreement. It provides an essential layer of protection as domestic oil and gas production declines across the region.

We must also diversify our fossil fuel sources and reduce overdependence on vulnerable supply chains.

We must recognise that strategic collaboration with trusted partners and regional groupings can strengthen ASEAN's long-term energy security.

ASEAN should fully leverage cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council, including the broader ASEAN-GCC-China nexus to build more reliable and resilient energy arrangements.

At the same time, the ASEAN Power Grid remains central to our energy transition and long-term security. Greater investment is needed to accelerate cross-border inter-connectivity and low-carbon growth.

In this context, I truly value the strong support of the Asian Development Bank and welcome the launch of the Regional Connectivity Fund for Energy, last month.

Now, the energy crisis is already feeding directly into food insecurity. Higher food prices are raising fertiliser, transport and production costs, creating immediate supply pressures across the region.

If disruptions persist, ASEAN faces the risk of lower yields and sustained food inflation well into next year. Food security must therefore be treated as a regional strategic priority.

I propose that our relevant Ministers urgently explore a regional standby arrangement for food security during a crisis, to ensure faster coordination and emergency response.

We should also strengthen the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) Mechanism and work with our partners to consider expanding cooperation beyond rice reserves to include fertiliser security.

The unfolding crisis also reminds us that our responsibility to protect ASEAN nationals in the affected regions. So, thank you Singapore for the initiative and we must remind ourselves that millions of our citizens live and work across West Asia, Middle East and their safety must remain a shared concern.

From migrant workers and seafarers to peacekeepers and students, the risk posed by regional instability demands stronger coordination among us.

We must therefore strengthen information-sharing, consular cooperation, emergency response mechanisms, and a closer collaboration to take a fiercely independent, courageous stand to

ensure international organisations and relevant stakeholders will be not only essential, but remain consistent in maintaining peace and security.

Maraming salamat.