

# pm's speech on asean founding anniversary (14 08 2012) ||

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will celebrate its 45th founding anniversary on August 8. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung on August 7 | | delivered a televised speech on this occasion. | | The following is the full text of the statement: | | | | Today, we join other Governments and people of ASEAN member countries in celebrating the 45th anniversary of the foundation of ASEAN. This is a special | | milestone for ASEAN, marking a path of growth and maturity with admirable achievements. | | | | Following four and a half decades of continued expansion of cooperation and promotion of integration, ASEAN has forged an important standing in the region | | and the world with recognised credit for its positive contributions to peace, stability, cooperation and development in Southeast Asia and the Asia - | | Pacific. In the advent of the ASEAN Community, the Association has been making strong moves with great efforts to strengthen cooperation and integration | | within ASEAN in the political-security, economic and cultural — social pillars. On top of that are efforts to narrow the development gap while expanding and | | upgrading multi-sided, mutually beneficial cooperation with outside partners, including major powers and centres of the world. ASEAN has played its central | | role in leading important dialogue and cooperation processes, such as ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) etc. It has been | | the main driver to promote regional cooperation and connectivity in East Asia. | | | | The main factor that makes ASEAN's standing and visibility is its capacity to maintain the "unity in diversity" and create synergy from the unity, solidarity| | and the "ASEAN Way". ASEAN has always promoted consensus, mutual respect

and assistance, focusing on and harmonising national interest with that of the whole community. The power of ASEAN unity has been tested as it sailed through the 1997 — 1998 financial crisis, working together and sharing with one another in overcoming the consequences of natural disasters and pandemics affecting the region. Solidarity and unity are also key to the prestige and credibility of ASEAN in its relations with outside partners. The past 45 years also witnessed ASEAN's initiative, creativeness and adaptability in facing new developments in the region and the world. Peace, stability, security and development in the region would have been impossible without ASEAN's positive contributions. The Association has adopted many important Documents, such as the Treaty on Amity and Cooperation (TAC), Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ), ARF Vision Statement 2020, Roadmap for an ASEAN Community by 2015, ASEAN Charter and so on. ASEAN has always attached importance to the furtherance of its cooperation with partners via the establishment of ASEAN-led regional mechanisms and cooperation forums such as ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, EAS, ARF etc. ASEAN centrality has been promoted thanks to its ability to reconcile, connect and balance concerns and interest in order to work together on building an environment of peace, stability and cooperation in the region as well as supporting efforts for connectivity and development. This is an important element that helps an organisation modest in size with a concert of small and medium countries to become a centre of gravity attracting partners, big and small, within and outside the region actively engaged in the processes of dialogue and cooperation in the Asia — Pacific. Formidable changes have been seen

in the region and the world and in ASEAN itself in the past 45 years. However, what remain unchanged and need to be preserved and promoted in the new context are ASEAN's norms, principles, ways of doing things and particularities. To achieve the ASEAN Community by 2015, ASEAN needs to observe with flexibility and skills the following principles and guidelines: First, remain one-minded in resolve and take strong actions to complete on schedule with quality cooperation plans in all political — security, economic, cultural-social pillars in the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community. Continue to intensify ASEAN connectivity, promote equitable, sustainable development and narrow the development gap. Strengthen actions on and raise the awareness about the building of a caring Community among regional Governments and people. Second, firmly maintain the fundamental principles, stay united and unanimous while being proactive and creative in settling emerging issues in the new development stage, especially challenges to peace, stability, security and development in the region. Continue to promote dialogue on building and sharing codes of conducts and conflict prevention. Strictly deliver on the commitments included in such documents as the TAC, SEANWFZ, Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC) etc. Settle peacefully all disputes and differences on the basis of international law and the ASEAN spirit of solidarity. Third, continually expand comprehensive cooperation with outside partners and be proactive in engaging them in the endeavours for peace, stability and development in the region as well as in supporting the process of community building, deepened integration and connectivity, and response to emerging challenges. To maintain ASEAN's centrality in the

region, the Association needs to strengthen unity, maintain a common position and voice on regional and international issues of common concern and interest of partners and ASEAN. Significant obstacles and challenges are awaiting ASEAN on its journey ahead. However, ASEAN has the common desire and interest in maintaining an environment of peace, stability for shared development and the experience and maturity earned in the past 45 years. It has the spirit of solidarity and ability to adopt flexible responses. This gives us the ground to solidly believe in the success of ASEAN in achieving its goal regardless of obstacles and challenges.

During the past 17 years, as an ASEAN member and at the new development stage of the Association, Vietnam always remains active, proactive and acts responsibly in contributing to the making of a strong, united, integrated ASEAN with an increasing role and position in the region and the world for the prosperous development of its member countries, peace, stability and cooperation in the region. ASEAN has been and will be an important pillar in Vietnam's foreign policy of independence, sovereignty, diversification and multilateralisation of international relations.

On the occasion of ASEAN's 45th anniversary, on behalf of the Vietnamese Government and people, I would like to extend my best wishes to the Governments and people of other member countries in the ASEAN family and of partners of ASEAN. May ASEAN continue to see sustained growth and greater successes given the remarkable achievements recorded in the past 45 years and deliver a life of peace, wellbeing and prosperity for all people in the region. VNA