

SPEECH BY
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF MALAYSIA,
TUN TENGKU MAIMUN BINTI TUAN MAT

ON THE OCCASION OF
THE ASEAN LAW ASSOCIATION (ALA) &
COUNCIL OF ASEAN CHIEF JUSTICES (CACJ)
GALA DINNER

SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

21 OCTOBER 2023

SALUTATIONS

- (1) My sister and brother Chief Justices and Heads of Delegation of the Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) and the ASEAN Law Association (ALA);
- (2) YBhg. Dato' Mah Weng Kwai, Chairman of the ALA General Assembly and ASEAN Law Conference Organising Committee;
- (3) Honourable judges from the ASEAN Judiciaries;

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and good evening.

INTRODUCTION

[1] I wish you a warm welcome to the ASEAN Law Association (ALA) and Council for ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ) Gala Dinner.

[2] It is said, often with good reason, that dinner is the worst time for a speech. Speak before dinner and you become “that person” between a hungry crowd and their food. Speak after dinner and you run the risk of losing the crowd. And so, I will keep it brief.

[3] It gives me great pride to state that we stand at the pinnacle of the 14th ASEAN Law Association (ALA) General Assembly, ASEAN Law Conference and the 44th ALA Governing Council Meeting and the historic CACJ Retreat. Over the course of the past five days, we have been privileged to witness an intellectually stimulating assembly and a successful conference. These platforms have facilitated profound legal discourse and spirited exchange of ideas through the 14th ALA General Assembly and the ASEAN Law Conference.

[4] Breaking away from the conventional formalities, the ASEAN Chief Justices gathered in a relaxed environment at the CACJ Retreat. This unique setting fostered an open deliberation and strategic planning for the future of CACJ, providing us with a roadmap for our journey in the coming years.

[5] Adding a lighter element to the events was the 18th ALA Championship Golf Tournament – a display of camaraderie and sportsmanship among the participants. This lively event served as a

powerful reminder of the strong bonds that we share within our legal fraternity.

[6] We also witnessed the inaugural ASEAN Law Association Moot Competition (ASEAN Moot 2023). It provided a thought-provoking and highly competitive platform for our emerging legal talents to sharpen their skills and deepen their understanding on the framework of ASEAN Agreements in the context of arguing on arising legal issues brought under dispute settlement mechanisms, simulated by the Moot Problem.

[7] Each of these landmark events, embody the spirit of collaboration and resolute commitment to the cause of justice and the Rule of Law. They have been the driving force behind our collective efforts over the past months. As we look back on our journey, we can see the fruits of our labour and the tangible impact of our collective efforts. As we look forward, we are filled with optimism and anticipation for a bright and promising future for the ASEAN legal fraternity.

[8] Tonight, I would like to begin by acknowledging and cherishing our long-standing friendship, thriving partnership, support, and steadfast co-operation within the ASEAN region, particularly amongst the CACJ Members and ALA's legal fraternity. Our friendship in the ASEAN legal community is unlike any other. There is a true sense of camaraderie and companionship.

[9] Above all, the reunion of the ASEAN legal community here is a testament to our long-standing commitment to coming together to discuss, address and resolve common issues and concerns, a commitment that began decades ago.

[10] Today, ALA stands tall 44 years after its conception, and has successfully completed its 14th General Assembly. This year's ALA General Assembly, the first of its kind post-pandemic, witnessed the participation of nearly 300 delegates from all over the ASEAN Member States.

[11] While ALA has been in existence for decades, the CACJ has a more recent genesis having been accredited as an entity associated with ASEAN only in 2017. CACJ formally adopted a Charter and a set of Rules in 2018.

[12] Marking a significant breakthrough in ASEAN history, we are celebrating a decade since the first CACJ meeting. Today, we revel in the success of our very first CACJ Retreat. The Retreat has proven itself to be a distinctive and an efficacious platform, enabling Chief Justices from various ASEAN Member States to engage in a frank, an informal and insightful discussions, in a more relaxed atmosphere.

[13] The highlight of this occasion was the hosting of the CACJ 10th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony at the Palace of Justice in Putrajaya. The CACJ 10th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony celebrated the inauguration of a comprehensive compilation of major legal instruments, prepared by the dedicated Working Groups led by Malaysia culminating into legal documents that benefit our entire region. We now even have our own commemorative stamp to celebrate.

[14] Overall, I think much has been accomplished by both ALA and CACJ but certainly, much more need to be done.

CONCLUSION

[15] As I helm both the ALA and CACJ, I assure my utmost commitment and unrelenting support to our collective objectives.

[16] Allow me to conclude by expressing my deepest gratitude – and mere words can hardly encapsulate it – for the massive efforts of the 14th ALA General Assembly, ASEAN Law Conference and the 44th ALA Governing Council Meeting organising committee. Their tireless contributions have been absolutely crucial, and I would like to record my heartfelt appreciation to the entire Malaysian legal fraternity for making these events possible.

[17] I also once again extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. Your presence is, but the pillar of all the events, for without you, none of these would be possible. Before embarking on your journey back home, do enjoy the food and festivities, cherish the lively companionship, and appreciate the presence of friends and colleagues of the ASEAN legal community.

[18] I wish everyone safe journey.

Thank you.