



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

SPEECH BY



**YANG DIMULIAKAN  
PEHIN DATU PEKERMA JAYA MAJOR GENERAL  
DATO PADUKA SERI MOHD TAWIH BIN ABDULLAH**

**COMMANDER ROYAL BRUNEI ARMED FORCES  
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**VETERANS CONFEDERATION OF ASEAN COUNTRIES' 30TH EXECUTIVE  
BOARD MEETING AND 17TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2017  
OPENING CEREMONY**

**FRIDAY  
24 NOVEMBER 2017**

**AT AL-BARAKAH HALL  
PARKVIEW HOTEL**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Sanggamara Diraja Major General (Retired) Pengiran Haji Ibnu Ba'asith bin Pengiran Datu Penghulu Pengiran Haji Apong.

Your Excellency Pehin Datu Padukaraja Major General (Retired) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Shari bin Ahmad, President of the Veterans Confederation of ASEAN Countries (VECONAC).

Distinguished Heads of Delegations,

Delegates,

Observers and Spouses of VECONAC Member Countries,

Distinguished Advisers of the Ex-Soldiers Association of Brunei Darussalam,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

**And a very good morning.**

Alhamdulillah, all praise to Allah, the most merciful and most compassionate, for His gracious blessing that we are able to gather here today in Brunei Darussalam for the opening ceremony of the VECONAC 30<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting and 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. May we continue to flourish in health and serenity under God's blessings and guidance.

First and foremost, allow me to convey my immense pleasure and heartfelt gratitude to all members of VECONAC for inviting me as the Guest of Honour this morning. I am truly honoured to join you for this particular opening ceremony as Brunei Darussalam was the first country to host this NOW YEARLY Executive Board Meeting and General Assembly on 6-10 October 2016. The next opportunity that Brunei Darussalam will have to host this event again will be in ten years' time. By that time, hopefully with long life and good health, I will be amongst members of the proud Veteran.

As rightfully pointed out by His Excellency First Admiral (Retired) Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Abdul Aziz bin Haji Mohd Tamit, the Deputy Minister of Defence during his speech last year at the opening ceremony of the VECONAC 29<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting and 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly 2016, it is truly heart-warming to see that the solidarity, bonds of brotherhood and enduring camaraderie has continued in strength, numbers and now, frequency of interaction. This fine tradition of VECONAC reflects the spirit of ASEAN's sense of belonging and in building closer relations through interactions at all levels and in many layers of our society.

It was also brought to my attention by His Excellency Major General (Retired) Pehin Dato Haji Shari bin Ahmad, who is also the President of Ex-Soldiers Association of Brunei Darussalam, of the Association's proposal to rename the Association to follow suit with the rest of the member countries veteran associations by inserting the key word "VETERANS". I do welcome this proposal as it will prove Brunei Darussalam's commitment towards One Community of ASEAN.

### **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,**

Allow me to welcome our dear friends from neighbouring ASEAN countries who are new to Brunei Darussalam, and to welcome back those who have been here before. I hope you will have an enjoyable and pleasant stay in Brunei Darussalam. I am extremely proud of the trust, confidence and respect that you have accorded to your counterparts here in Brunei Darussalam by attending and supporting the VECONAC 30<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting and 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly 2017.

A special welcome also to the spouses of the VECONAC member countries. Thank you for your presence and continued support. There are many activities planned for you which I hope will be able to make your stay pleasant and memorable.

### **BELOVED GUESTS,**

As you are all aware, Brunei Darussalam has recently celebrated His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's Golden Jubilee of his accession to the throne and I am proud to see the commitment and patriotism of our former personnel of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces in this historical and grand event. The Ex-Soldiers Association of Brunei Darussalam or in Malay, Persatuan Bekas Perajurit Negara Brunei Darussalam, which was established and became a member of VECONAC in 1992, continues to be an active player and significant contributor to nation-building and social cohesion.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank you all for the service that you have provided to your respective armed forces. You were and still continue to be the guiding force for all of us in the military today. You are the reason to remember why men and women in uniform proudly serve their countries and for all of us currently serving to continue your journey of protecting our nation and people now and for many future generations to come. I am extremely proud to stand in the midst of patriots who have nobly served their respective countries and communities.

On a final note, I would like to sincerely congratulate and express my sincere appreciation to VECONAC and each veteran organisation's work and activities in support of the broader peace, stability and security of our respective nations and region as a whole. I wish you all the very best for the upcoming meeting and assembly over the next few days and I hope you will further strengthen the bond and friendships that is already evident amongst all members of VECONAC.

To me, this opportunity represents a significant platform towards a deeper understanding and cooperation amongst all ASEAN veterans.

With the kalimah Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim, I declare the VECONAC 30<sup>th</sup> Executive Board Meeting and 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly 2017 officially open.

**“VECONAC FOREVER, FOREVER VECONAC”**

Thank you.

وبالله توفيق والهداية  
والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته