

OPENING REMARKS

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MALAYSIA

**26TH ASEAN PLUS THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS'
MEETING**

KUALA LUMPUR, 10 JULY 2025

OPENING REMARKS

His Excellency Iwaya Takeshi

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan and

Coordinator of the Plus Three Countries

His Excellency Wang Yi

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the

People's Republic of China

His Excellency Park Yoonjoo

**First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic
of Korea**

ASEAN Foreign Ministers,

Excellencies,

- 1. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, I am honoured to welcome Your Excellencies to Kuala Lumpur, for the 26th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting. I extend a special welcome to His Excellency Iwaya Takeshi, who joins us at this Meeting for the first time.**
- 2. Our meeting today reaffirms our collective commitment, to further deepen the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation, as a driving force for peace, stability, and prosperity in East Asia. Amid complex regional and global developments, the relevance of platforms that advocate dialogue and cooperation, such as this, has never been more evident.**
- 3. The ASEAN Plus Three cooperation was established in 1997, to coordinate a regional response to the financial crisis at the time.**

- 4. Over the years, the region has weathered a few other challenges. Through it all, we have stood firmly together, coordinated our response, endured and overcome.**
- 5. Consequently, the ASEAN Plus Three has evolved into one of the region's most enduring frameworks of cooperation. It is a hallmark of teamwork that is dependable and dynamic, and adapt at navigating complex regional realities.**
- 6. It enables us to consult, coordinate, and cooperate not only in times of crisis, but also in our collective pursuit of sustained peace, inclusive growth, and shared resilience in East Asia.**

- 7. Today, we are once again being tested. The region is facing a storm – what might be called the perfect storm. The challenges are multi-fold, ranging from intensifying great power rivalry, economic fragmentation, technological disruptions, and transboundary threats. Unilateralism and nationalism are on the rise, marginalising multilateralism that is essential for a stable world order.**
- 8. Nevertheless, I am confident that with our collective steadfastness, and strong commitment to dialogue and cooperation, we will again prevail.**

- 9. There have been some encouraging developments recently. These include the endorsement of the Rapid Financing Facility (RFF) under the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM), as well as the momentum from the Leaders' statements on Electric Vehicle Ecosystem (2023), and on Strengthening Connectivity on Regional Supply Chains (2024).**
- 10. These are not isolated achievements. They illustrate the APT's capacity to generate value, respond with agility and lead with foresight.**
- 11. Looking ahead, the ASEAN Plus Three must remain agile, well-coordinated, and forward-looking, to ensure continued relevance and impact. This requires us to embrace frontier technologies.**

- 12. ASEAN's regional digital transformation is projected to drive, approximately USD 2 trillion in regional GDP. With the expertise of China, Japan, and the ROK in digital technologies, the opportunities and potential returns are massive.**
- 13. Such initiatives support Malaysia's objective, as Chair of ASEAN, to narrow development gaps, enabling equitable development, promoting sustainable growth, fostering peace through mutual trust and cooperation, improving living standards and human capital, as well as fostering social cohesion and participation, in an inclusive and sustainable manner.**
- 14. We should keep in mind that collectively, the ASEAN Plus Three represents a combined population of 2.28 billion people, with a total nominal GDP of approximately USD 29.33 trillion, or 25.77% of global GDP.**

- 15. This scale underscores the strategic weight and global relevance of our partnership, as well as the responsibility we bear in ensuring regional stability, inclusive growth, and sustainable development.**
- 16. Let us, thus, work together to sustain the momentum, strengthen future-oriented cooperation, and deliver tangible benefits to our peoples and beyond the region.**

Thank you.