

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY
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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,
CHAIRMAN OF THE APEC 2017 NATIONAL COMMITTEE
AT THE XXIV PECC GENERAL MEETING
(Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 15 May 2017)

VISION FOR AN ASIA-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you at this important General Meeting.

I warmly congratulate the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and all members on your championship and outstanding work for the region's cooperation and prosperity over nearly four decades.

The Council has asserted itself as a unique institution in harnessing the heart and mind from business, government and academic circles to formulate ideas on the most significant challenges facing the Asia - Pacific.

Looking back at the last three decades, we can be proud of the transformation of Asia-Pacific into a region of peace and a driver of global growth and economic integration.

Ours is the only region that has not suffered from a single armed conflict since the end of the Cold War. When PECC was established in 1980, the region accounted for over 40% of global GDP and has now risen to over 50%. Over a billion people in the region have been lifted out of extreme poverty.

Looking forward, the global economic power is shifting to Asia – Pacific, with emerging economies in the region expected to drive regional and global growth. The outlook for our region remains robust – the strongest in the world.

As a powerhouse of new technologies, skilled workforce and burgeoning middle class, the region's share of the global GDP is expected to rise to almost 70% by 2050. 10 out of 20 largest economies are from the Asia – Pacific.

The region is a testament to the shared prosperity that can be gained through deeper economic integration and cooperation and more open trade and investment. So it would not be an exaggeration to project that the 21st century is an "Asia-Pacific century".

However, how much we will achieve depends on how effectively we address three “baskets” of challenges facing the region, both immediate and long-term.

The first are sluggish productivity, rising inequality within and among economies, demographic challenges, including aging population, poverty, urbanization, and climate change.

The second is whether we are ready for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Just within nearly two decades of the 21st century, we have seen massive technological changes begin to alter the nature of work, transform our society and the way we connect and interact with each other.

The third are the lingering risks of geopolitical conflicts and the lack of a responsive regional governance. The regional landscape is experiencing complex and fundamental shifts. There are also emerging security issues, such as security implications of emerging technologies, cyber vulnerabilities, resources management...

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme and agenda that you have chosen for this meeting are timely and relevant. It is high time for us to have in-depth deliberations on a vision for the Asia - Pacific region for decades to come.

In the region, the ASEAN Community has just embarked on its Vision 2025. APEC has started a process of reflection on a post - 2020 vision.

PECC, as a pioneer for new ideas on trade, investment, growth and integration, has been taking a leading role in charting a vision for the region. As for our meeting today, I can see many questions are on the agenda. I hope at this meeting you will share insights and perspectives on major components of a vision for our region.

The key questions for us are:

- What is the goal for the Asia – Pacific in the coming decades? Can our region reassert its global leadership? Can we build a strong Asia – Pacific community and partnership for sustainable and inclusive development?
- What should we do to achieve inclusive, sustainable and innovative growth in the digital age? What will be our new comparative advantages? How to create new drivers for growth?
- How can we build a seamless Asia-Pacific as a driver of global economic integration in a globalized world? How should we prepare to take advantage of emerging cooperation arrangements?

In answering these questions, let me share with you some of my observations:

First, my vision is to build a peaceful, dynamic, resilient, inclusive, comprehensively connected and integrated Asia-Pacific community, which gives equal access and opportunities for all. The growing denominator of shared interest offers enormous opportunities for the realization of this goal.

Second, our economic gravity should be driven by sustainable, innovative and inclusive quality growth, deepening connectivity and economic integration. Major drivers should include structural reform, new technologies, especially digital advances, e-commerce, digital trade, quality human capital, competitive and innovative MSMEs, economic, financial and social inclusion...

Third, we need to vigorously promote free and open trade and investment, regional trade agreements, free trade areas (RTAs/FTAs), toward an eventual Free Trade Area for the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). We must seize the opportunities of the existing and ongoing regional arrangements.

As the global technological hub, we are better placed to advance further mega-networks of Global Value Chains (GVCs) and Production, connectivity and infrastructure development cooperation.

We will also need innovative forms of regulatory and trade collaborations and coherence, address next-generation trade and investment issues, capacity building and economic and technical cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

What we have learnt from the past three decades is that no vision or strategy can be realized without peace and security. Peace and growth and economic integration are inseparable companions.

In the increasingly uncertain and volatile global landscape, more than ever, we need a regional architecture that is transparent, open, rules-based, constructive and responsive. Such an architecture must be capable of ensuring the complementarity of multi-layered cooperation and effective regional governance. It must also engage and harmonize the interest of all stakeholders in the region and beyond.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Lying at the heart of the Asia-Pacific, Viet Nam has been pursuing comprehensive renovation, extensive international integration and proactive multilateral diplomacy. The region has always been a corner-stone of our foreign policy. **The region's future is the future of Viet Nam.**

Your recommendations and insights today are important to APEC's process of reflection on its work toward 2020 and beyond and "creating new dynamism, fostering a shared future" which is the overarching theme of APEC 2017. All these are very meaningful for the "APEC Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on APEC toward 2020 and beyond" co-organized by Viet Nam and PECC tomorrow.

Viet Nam treasures the strong support and effective collaboration extended by PECC and all of you who are here today. You have always stood side by side with us over the past years.

I wish you a fruitful General Meeting.

I thank you.

