

**Remarks by Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN
At the Second Best of ASEAN Performing Arts
“Tapestry of Thai Beauty and Grace”
Gedung Kesenian Jakarta, Indonesia, 8 August 2008**

Your Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and Madam,
Your Excellency, the Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia and Madam,
Your Excellency, Pak Ali Alatas and Ibu Yunisa Alatas,
Mr Kla Somtrakool, Advisor to the Minister of Culture of Thailand,
Ambassadors of all the ASEAN Member States,
Ambassadors to the Republic of Indonesia,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is a very fortuitous day. On this day, the 8th of August 1967, ASEAN was born in the city of Bangkok. Today, we celebrate the ASEAN Day and at the same time, we celebrate our unity in diversity with a cultural performance from Thailand, who is in the Chair of ASEAN now.

This morning, many of Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen were with us at the Flag Hoisting Ceremony at the ASEAN Secretariat. It was organised to mark our 41st birthday. Tonight, we get together to enjoy Thailand's 'Tapestry of Thai Beauty and Grace'; a fitting icing on the ASEAN's birthday cake.

The celebration does not stop here tonight. On Sunday, we will leave the city of Jakarta. Many of us, the ASEAN Secretariat and members of the Embassies of ASEAN, will go on the ASEAN excursion to Parung, Bogor – a day of bonding for the ASEAN family.

Our ASEAN family was built on this day forty-one years ago. Our Founding Fathers - from Indonesia, Adam Malik; from Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak; from the Philippines, Narciso Ramos; from Singapore, S. Rajaratnam; and, from Thailand, Thanat Khoman - signed the ASEAN Declaration marking the birth of ASEAN. And sitting among you tonight is someone who was present there at the creation, Pak Ali Alatas.

The ASEAN Declaration was conceived with the aim to further strengthen the existing bonds of regional solidarity and cooperation. Even before ASEAN existed, we already were a region that was bound together by the ties of history and culture. Forty-one years later, I believe our shared histories, our interests and our goals, are bringing us together even closer. Tonight, we celebrate that bond of friendship. We are painting that vision of unity of ASEAN Community together.

This morning, I said ASEAN is like a tapestry of hope. We are all engaged in weaving this tapestry into a new structure of hope and prosperity for our peoples here in the region. The building blocks are all the peoples of ASEAN; 10 states and 567 million of us.

Tonight, some of them have travelled all the way from Thailand to bring to you the best performances that Thailand has to offer. I thank the Thai Ministry of Culture, the Thai Embassy and the Thai Tourism Authority, for their support and contribution to the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts series.

The series has been conceived with the support of the Ministers of Culture and Tourism of ASEAN in order to make sure that the people of Jakarta and the expatriate community of Jakarta are aware of the fact that the ASEAN Secretariat is here and has been here for a long, long time. Thank you very, very much, Jakarta.

I thank all of you for joining us tonight, knowing that you will miss the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. You made a great sacrifice. I hope you will find it worth it. I am sure the opening ceremony will be repeated for your enjoyment later.

We at ASEAN would like to extend our best wishes and our congratulations to the People's Republic of China for hosting this great event here in Asia. Many teams from ASEAN are contesting. We would like to send them our best wishes and wish that they will bring back as many medals – gold, silver and bronze – as they can to ASEAN.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to invite you to enjoy the Best of ASEAN Performing Arts series, Thailand version. It is called the 'Tapestry of Thai Beauty and Grace' from Thailand.

Thank you very, very much.

Enjoy the show.