



OPENING REMARKS
HIS EXCELLENCY CHAN FOONG HIN
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY,
MALAYSIA

IN CONJUNCTION WITH

THE 45th ASEAN MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND
FORESTRY MEETING AND OTHER RELATED MEETINGS

4 OCTOBER 2023 | WEDNESDAY | 9.00 AM
GRAND HYATT HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, participants of the 45th ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry 2023, and members of the media,

1. On behalf of the Government of Malaysia and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, it is both my pleasure and my honour to extend a warm welcome to all of you as we gather here in Kuala Lumpur for the Opening Ceremony of the 45th Meeting of AMAF. With your distinguished presence, I am confident that the days ahead will bear witness to fruitful discussions underpinned by a spirit of unity and cooperation.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

2. Allow me to begin by emphasizing the enduring relevance of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) in today's ever-changing global landscape. In a world hampered by uncertainties, the pursuit of food security remains paramount for all ASEAN Member States (AMS).

3. Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has demonstrated remarkable growth driven by our commitment to open trade. In this region, trade is not just a means for progress; it is the cornerstone of our collective development. With a combined GDP of USD 2.55 trillion and a market of approximately 650 million consumers, including an expanding middle class, ASEAN is poised to become the fourth-largest economy by 2030, standing alongside the US, China, and the EU.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

4. Our collaboration in agriculture and food dates back to 1968, starting with cooperation in food production and supply. As demand expanded, this area of cooperation broadened to include agriculture and forestry in 1977. Today, ASEAN's cooperative efforts span critical areas such as sustainability, sanitary and phytosanitary, food security, food safety, halal food, crops, livestock, agricultural training and extension, agricultural cooperatives, and initiatives promoting agriculture and forest products.

5. The Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry for the period of 2016 to 2025 outlines our vision and objectives, taking into account global and regional contexts influenced by rapid economic growth, regional integration, globalization, and the challenges of climate change.

6. Agriculture is not just an economic sector; it is a way of life within ASEAN. In eight out of ten member states, agriculture is a cornerstone of their economies. In some member states, agriculture contributes over 40% of their GDP. Many member states feature prominently as major producers and exporters of products like palm oil, crude rubber, rice, sugar, seafood, fruits and forestry products.

7. However, the sustainability of our agricultural and forestry sectors, which is vital to the livelihoods of millions of people in ASEAN, faces imminent threats from climate change, overfishing, unsustainable agriculture practices, food wastage, and more. It is incumbent upon us to safeguard this sector, a source of both sustenance and income, while responsibly managing our limited resources.

8. Our shared vision to deepen linkages among ourselves and with external partners is a vital endeavour. In these turbulent times, a united ASEAN can better absorb and mitigate external shocks from policy shifts or regional conflicts, ensuring stability and prosperity for our people.

9. This vision resonates well with this year's AMAF theme, "Growing Together: Advancing ASEAN Agriculture and Forestry for Sustainable Development". Hence, let us bring the spirit of togetherness in our deliberations throughout the meetings.

10. Certainly, we will intensify our efforts to advance existing collaboration among the AMS. Furthermore, we will engage with our Dialogue Partners to explore avenues for deeper and more meaningful cooperation. I am confident that we will achieve significant outcomes in the days ahead as we renew our existing efforts and make new commitments to fortify AMAF, creating broader and deeper partnerships with our Dialogue Partners. These partnerships will serve as a shield of protection against uncertainties and challenges, guiding us towards growth, progress, and prosperity for our people.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

11. On the domestic front, Malaysia has been a firm supporter of ASEAN's initiatives. In the agriculture and forestry sectors, we are currently implementing our National Agrofood Policy 2021-2030 (DAN 2.0), National Agricommodity Policy 2021-2030 (DAKN 2030) and Malaysia Policy on Forestry 2021. These policies aim to drive the relevant changes in the agriculture and forestry sectors, protecting not only future food security and

sustainable resources but also the well-being of Malaysia's farmers and producers while preserving the environment.

12. It is therefore by firm conviction that we can chart progressive and robust deliberations in our meetings ahead. Each of us brings a wealth of expertise to these meetings, and I have every confidence that our discussions will yield positive results.

13. On this note, I officially declare, the 45th AMAF and related Meetings, open.

Thank you very much.

Salam Malaysia MADANI!