

**OPENING ADDRESS BY Y.B. DATUK HAMZAH ZAINUDDIN
DEPUTY MINISTER OF PLANTATION INDUSTRIES AND COMMODITIES
THE 12TH MEETING ON THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR ASEAN COCOA CLUB (ACC) ON
ASEAN COOPERATION AND JOIN APPROACHES IN AGRICULTURE AND FOREST PRODUCTS
SCHEME
13 MAY 2009
RENAISSANCE HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR**

Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri Abi Musa Asaari Mohamed Nor
Chairman
Malaysian Cocoa Board

Yang Berbahagia Dato' Dr. Azhar Ismail
Director General
Malaysian Cocoa Board

Mr. B.Y. Ng
Chairman
Cocoa Manufacturers' Group

Distinguished Guests
Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum and a very good morning.

First of all, I would like to extend a very warm welcome or "Selamat Datang" to our delegates from ASEAN countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam to the 12th Meeting of the national Focal Point for ASEAN Cocoa Club (ACC) on ASEAN Cooperation and joint Approaches in Agriculture and Forest Products Promotion Scheme. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to the Malaysian Cocoa Board for inviting to this ACC meeting.

2. Looking back, it has been 15 years since the ACC was established in 1994, with the aim to improve and strengthen the network of cocoa trading among the members of ASEAN. As for the 12th Meeting of the ACC, it is indeed important for us, even though the ACC is a non-binding organization, nevertheless, its members can develop ideas and policies to address issues regarding the cocoa industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Cocoa is grown principally in West Africa, Central and South America as well as Asia and Oceania. As a whole, the ASEAN countries ranked as the third largest grower and producer of cocoa beans in the world and the largest in Asia. With an estimated cocoa production of 547,900 tonnes, ASEAN accounted for about 16% of the total world cocoa production in 2008/09. Two members of ASEAN, Indonesia and Malaysia are ranked among the top cocoa producers in the Asia and Oceania region. These two countries contribute about 15% of the world total cocoa production. I certainly

believe that the land in ASEAN region is as fertile or suitable to plant cocoa as in other cocoa producing countries, like Africa and South America. Hence, the contribution of the region to the world cocoa production may increase in the near future.

4. In terms of grinding, the total cocoa grinding in ASEAN is estimated at 520,000 tonnes, accounting for about 14 % of the total world cocoa grinding in 2008/09. As a whole, the ASEAN countries are the largest cocoa processors in Asia and Oceania region, contributing about 72% of the total cocoa grindings in this region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Given the present economic situation, all of us including the cocoa industry are facing challenging times. Therefore, greater efforts must be taken to ensure the demand of cocoa is sustained. Among others, we should always be responsive to consumer requirements by providing the best quality products and services to our consumer. In this regard the ACC is one of the platforms for the ASEAN countries to work closely together during this difficult time of economic crisis in coming up with necessary measures to overcome issues and problems facing the cocoa industry.

6. We need to work closely to address the decline in demand for chocolate and chocolate products in our traditional markets like the United States of America and Europe by strengthening our efforts to develop new markets. For instance, we should encourage the people of Republic of China and India to consume more cocoa, including by creatively creating new recipes for *dim sum* or *mutton curry* with a right amount of cocoa powder in it.

7. I have been informed that among the main items to be discussed in the meeting is the formulation of the ASEAN Cocoa Contract. Since trading of cocoa beans among members of ASEAN has been on the increasing trend, I do believe that having our own cocoa contract terms will further facilitate trade within ASEAN. I certainly hope that this contract could be finalized and implemented soon.

8. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Malaysian Cocoa Board as the Secretariat of ACC who has worked very hard to ensure the success of this meeting. I also hope that all delegates will have a fruitful discussion in the endeavor to further strengthen and enhance the intra-ASEAN trade on cocoa and cocoa products.

9. On that note, I now have the pleasure to declare the 12th Meeting of the National Focal Point for ASEAN Cocoa Club (ACC) on ASEAN Cooperation and joint Approaches in Agriculture and forest Products Promotion Scheme Open.

Thank you.

Kuala Lumpur
13 May 2009