

Foreword



In this 50th year of ASEAN, much is being written about its achievements – and there is indeed much to commend. As the Association transits to become a set of Communities and an eventual One Community rather than a less tangible set of declarations, principles, and agreements, more than ever, ASEAN must be felt by its peoples to create emotional bonds.

But for some, these bonds already exist. Government officials from each ASEAN Member State, officials at the ASEAN Secretariat, and statesmen from both within and outside the ASEAN Member States have already dedicated years of their professional careers to make ASEAN the vibrant organisation it is today. This has required these different officials to work together closely over protracted periods, honing their skills in diplomacy, tact, and, above all, compromise in pursuit of the agreed ultimate objectives of this common enterprise.

In this volume, we are honoured to be able to share the memories and reflections of individuals who have given so much to shape the ASEAN we know today, and to bring about an ASEAN centred upon three pillars: the Political–Security Community, the Economic Community, and the Socio–Cultural Community.

A common theme to all contributions is the humble origins of the ASEAN project, linked only by an interwoven desire for ASEAN to push ahead and push ahead together. Key players in the ASEAN story were willing to learn from other models, but the product they have crafted is its own distinct model. By so doing, the Leaders of ASEAN have been able to ‘transcend elite arrangements, and engage the interests of ordinary ASEAN people’, with pillars able to adapt to the ever-changing pressures of regionalism and globalisation along the way.

In this volume, our knowledge of the ASEAN journey is enriched by the private thoughts and reflections of those who have given distinguished service and made an outstanding contribution to ASEAN. To all the contributors, I greatly appreciate your candour and willingness to share your memories and reflections with us and,

in so doing, shedding light on how your travails allowed us to get to where we are today. You are all a testimony to the effort that has gone into making ASEAN a community for its peoples, way beyond and above a set of frameworks.

In addition to the editors of this volume headed by Dr Surin Pitsuwan, former ASEAN Secretary-General, may I also extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to H.E. Elizabeth Buensuceso, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN, for the support she has given ERIA to see this five-volume commemorative work to celebrate ASEAN at 50 come to fruition. I would like to also thank key officials of permanent missions to ASEAN and of the foreign affairs ministries of several ASEAN Member States for their support to the project, including H.E. Ambassador Norng Sakal of Cambodia, H.E. Ambassador Min Lwin of Myanmar, H.E. Ambassador Nguyen Hoanh Nam of Viet Nam, H.E. Ambassador Pengiran Hajah Faedah Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahman of Brunei Darussalam, H.E. Ambassador Chilman Arisman of Indonesia, H.E. Ambassador Latsamy Keomany of the Lao PDR, H.E. Ambassador Shariffah Norhana Syed Mustaffa of Malaysia, H.E. Ambassador Tan Hung Seng of Singapore, and H.E. Ambassador Phasporn Sangasubana of Thailand.

ERIA is proud to have been able to work with ASEAN for this special tribute.

Jakarta, August 2017



Hidetoshi Nishimura

President

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia