

Chairman of the 2nd ACD Summit,
Your Highnesses, Excellencies.

I would like to thank the Government and people of Thailand for the warm welcome and kind hospitality extended to me. And to the Chairman for his personal initiative in advancing the work of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

The Forum continues to progress, particularly since our first Summit in Kuwait chaired by His Highness the Emir of Kuwait. I look forward to welcoming His Highness to Brunei Darussalam on a State Visit soon.

Allow me to also welcome Turkey and Nepal to their first ACD Summit.

Mr Chairman,

Since we last met, the global community continues to be seized with a multitude of challenges.

The images of conflicts and instability affecting various parts of the world remain a constant trend in international affairs. The overall global outlook is further affected by threats having dire consequences on humanity.

In recent years, many countries here have been affected by the tragic refugee situation. Globally, we are grappling with the impact of uneven development, climate change and how to ensure sustainable development.

The pursuit of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is by no means an easy task to fulfil.

Mr. Chairman,

In the face of these adverse developments, I remain confident about Asia's potential and place in this century. A visionary's dream of the continent is within striking distance.

I am confident it would be one, which is; politically peaceful, stable and economically prosperous. It should also be comprehensively modern, competitive in its industries, open in its trade linkages and endowed with well-functioning infrastructure.

However, we should achieve more than these.

I wish to see an Asia that is politically and socially responsive and responsible to the needs of its people.

It must strive towards the best in international norms and standards, advocating good governance, social equality and justice, promoting quality of life - all through mutual respect and cooperation.

In this regard, the ACD as an Asia-wide forum is in a unique position to contribute to global efforts to tackle issues and concerns and work towards an Asian community.

I, therefore, suggest that particular emphasis be placed on specific areas of our agenda

First, we must support each other's efforts in combatting the scourge of terrorism and extremism.

Our forum must promote tolerance, understanding, moderation and respect for each other's peaceful values.

Second, it is critical that the work on climate change receives a stronger boost from the robust contribution of an Asian cooperation.

Our support to this urgent endeavour especially through the ratification and implementation of the Paris Agreement is essential in securing the livelihoods of our future generations.

Third, Asia is diverse in many aspects.

It calls upon us to forge strong bonds to bring together the many countries and peoples in addressing common interests and concerns.

Thus, it is imperative the ACD looks into ways to enhance connectivity amongst us for the benefits of our peoples.

It is neither new nor in any way threatening to us. In its many forms, such as trade and cultural exchanges, it has aided us since centuries ago.

Today, in its modern context, such as in ICT, it is significantly impacting on our peoples. I believe enhancing linkages and communications amongst our countries and peoples through greater “connectivity” will bring us closer in promoting the community we desire.

This entails building up ‘hard and soft infrastructure’, which would provide an added impetus to Asia’s development and in realizing an Asian community.

While promoting these, it is also important to assure our peoples that their basic concerns are being addressed.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, I look forward to these ideas being pursued.

We have taken a step in the right direction with the *ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 and the Bangkok Declaration*.

I also endorse the statement on *‘Re-igniting Growth through Partnerships for Connectivity’* in pursuit of sustainable development as well as the setting up of the Secretariat to better coordinate our work.

Finally, I wish the United Arab Emirates much success as they assume the ACD Chairmanship.

Thank you.