

Welcoming remarks by Antonio Prado  
Round Table Discussion  
“Regional Mapping of Latin America and the Caribbean and ASEAN:  
Opportunities and Challenges in Bi-regional Trade and Investment”  
16 March 2011

Mr. Teiseran Foun Cornelis, Director of the Center of Policy Planning and Development for America and Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia;

Mr. Arifi Saiman, Deputy Director

Members of the Embassy of Indonesia in Chile

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a privilege for ECLAC and an honor for me to receive and give a warm welcome to the delegation of the Government of Indonesia, visiting us today to exchange ideas and information about the state of trade and investment in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The inevitable and progressive interaction between countries and regions of the world requires more and more coordinated institutional efforts, so we can properly address the challenges arising from this interdependence and benefit from the opportunities that it creates.

For several years, governments and regional institutions already have been promoting and moving towards regional integration processes that enhance the lives of its inhabitants, through the creation of organizations that coordinate and regulate these processes, including economic integration.

On the other hand, there are regional organizations such as ECLAC and ESCAP, which fully represent its respective regional members and contribute ideas and technical assistance to fulfill these processes of regional integration.

In recent years ECLAC has contributed to various country and regional organizations to advance economic integration not only at a regional level, but also has cooperated with ideas and proposals to achieve economic integration between different regions of the world, including Asia in general and Southeast Asia in particular, which have become a region of high interest for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This leads us to a particular interest in working together with ASEAN, through its Secretariat or directly with members, and with regional academic institutions which also consider both regional and trans-Pacific economic integration a priority.

The importance of Indonesia in Asia and the world is well known, being the largest democracy in a Muslim-majority state, inclusive with its people and with well functioning institutions whose work has led to a progressive economic development. At a global level, Indonesia belongs to the G-20, representing the interests and demands of developing economies, which is the case of all Latin American countries.

The recent global financial crisis has left a series of consequences, with varying outcomes in different parts of the world. While developed countries have suffered the worst effects of the crisis, emerging economies have generally been able to face it properly, mitigating the damage to its population and productive structures.

This is the case of most Latin American countries, which in varying degrees have been adequately resilient to address the post crisis period, better positioned than in the past, adopting appropriate and timely macroeconomic policies and measures, creating an unusual opportunity to move towards enhancing the welfare of the population by reducing poverty and increasing employment.

This scenario provides a great opportunity for both Latin America and the Caribbean and ASEAN, through a joint effort of cooperation and mutual benefit, particularly in economics and trade, to strengthen and advance their ability to grant people a better life with more and better jobs that ensure sustained economic growth over time.

The area of economic and technical cooperation is vast and unexplored, such as infrastructure development in its various dimensions, including energy and ports. This is an area that could translate into projects of mutual benefit.

I hope then that this brief roundtable discussion facilitates the exchange of ideas and promotes closer relations between ASEAN and Latin America and the Caribbean through Indonesia's leadership role in this prosperous region of Asia.

Thank you very much and welcome.