

Opening Address
By
Hon. Atthaniti Disatha-Amnarj
President of the ASEAN Law Association
at the 10th General Assembly Meeting
Hanoi, Vietnam
15th October 2009

His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,
Distinguished Chairpersons of ALA National Committees,
Distinguished Delegates,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ASEAN Law Association takes great pride in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to preside over the official opening of the 10th General Assembly Meeting of ASEAN Law Association today. Vietnam is a great country with great values and tradition. The fact that the 10th General Assembly is held in Hanoi will be recorded as a major cornerstone in the history of ALA. Vietnam with its rich resources and creativities will undoubtedly contribute to the growth of ALA and take ALA to a new height. On behalf of the ASEAN Law Association, I would like to record our gratitude and heartfelt indebtedness to His Excellency the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for sharing with us a very precious moment this morning.

It is an exciting time in Hanoi, Vietnam and an exciting time for ASEAN Law Association as we embark on a new era of our organization after the entry into force of ASEAN Charter.

Since the 29th ALA Governing Council Meeting in Penang, Malaysia in August 2008, along with the 30th ALA Governing Council Meeting in Brunei Darussalam in April 2009, ALA has expressed its desire to cooperate with ASEAN in the process of the implementation of the

ASEAN Charter. These new challenges under the new loop of ASEAN Charter need to be properly addressed. That is why we have chosen the theme “**ASEAN Charter – Taking ASEAN to New Heights**”. The theme has been chosen because:

Firstly, it is important that ALA could study into how ALA could help with the ASEAN Charter. This was a good opportunity for our organization to do something new in relation to the ASEAN Charter since the ASEAN Charter had far reaching significance. In addition, the discussion will be made in relation to ASEAN cooperation, so that we will be able to address the challenges confronting. I fervently hope that this will be an important turning point in our effort to create a sense of ‘ASEAN’ among our members.

Secondly, ALA may explore a legal arm for the ASEAN and make it more specific. The panel discussion will identify of the present legal issues under the ASEAN Charter and propose legal measures to resolve those legal issues. Indeed, this event will be yet another good opportunity for our members to have open and extensive discussion on issues of common interests.

In view of the recent progress in ASEAN cooperation and integration process, in particular, the entry into force of ASEAN Charter, Article 16 of which provides that ASEAN may engage with entities which support the ASEAN Charter. As the President of the ALA, I have the honour to inform you that ALA is ready to cooperate with ASEAN in the implementation of and achieving the objectives of ASEAN Charter to become ASEAN community in the year 2015.

I am delighted to have H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN with us, and he will deliver a keynote speech on “***Possible Co-operation Between ASEAN and ALA***” in order to share with the ALA Members on ASEAN Charter and the direction of ASEAN integration process as well as exchange views on ways and means for ALA to cooperate with ASEAN in its implementation of the ASEAN Charter.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Founded in 1979, ALA is one of the oldest and largest law associations in this region. ALA serves as a collective voice for all the different branches of law profession – judges, law teachers, law practitioners and government lawyers. We strive to advance the professional growth and interests of our membership, fostering partnership and humanity.

We are proud of ALA's history of pursuing our friendship and the advancement of diversity in the legal profession and hope that we continue nurturing exceptional organization to ensure social justice and equality for all.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to ALA National Committee of Vietnam and the Organizing Committee for the excellent work they have done in organizing this meeting. In particular, I would like to pay tribute and extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Pham Quoc Anh, Chairman of the National Committee of Vietnam, Ms. Le Thi Kim Thanh and their staff for the warm hospitality, excellent management and superb organization.

We have many exciting programs planned for this event. We hope that you will join us and get involved. I finally wish each and every one of you a great success in your deliberation at this General Assembly.

Thank you very much.