



SPEECH OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASEAN CENTRE FOR ENERGY (ACE)

ACE Executive Director:

Excellency, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy Transition and Water Transformation (PETRA), Malaysia, Honourable YAB Dato' Sri **Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof**.

Esteemed Colleagues, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon and warm greetings from the ASEAN Centre for Energy.

It is my great honour and privilege to extend a heartfelt welcome to Excellency and esteemed guests that gathered together for the Official Launch of 25th ASEAN Energy Business Forum (AEBF-25) here in Kuala Lumpur. The ASEAN Centre for Energy is privileged to organise this formal announcement of AEBF-25 with the Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation (PETRA) Malaysia as the Host, under Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship 2025. Today's event we would like to provide Excellency and esteemed guests with an introduction to this year's theme, key objectives, and strategic direction in guiding collective efforts toward the region's energy development and transition of the business forum.

The ASEAN region faces both extraordinary opportunities and pressing challenges in shaping a sustainable energy future. The 8th ASEAN Energy Outlook (AEO8) paints a compelling picture: by 2050, ASEAN's population will surge by 15.8%, accompanied by an average annual economic growth rate of 4%. These projections underscore a critical reality – energy demand will continue to rise, demanding urgent innovation, collaboration, and strategic foresight to achieve energy security, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability for all.

More importantly, this growth must be met with a unified response. ASEAN cannot move forward through national ambition alone. To achieve that, we must rely on strengthened regional cooperation, consistent policy dialogue, and practical engagement platforms that enable governments, businesses, and partners to co-create and co-deliver.

At the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE), we recognise that meeting these challenges requires more than ambition – it demands unity. AEBF as the international conference and exhibition that fosters dialogue and collaboration on the development of the ASEAN energy sector, continues to embody that role as a forum that enables exchange, collaboration, and investment in support of ASEAN's energy aspirations.

AEBF brings the theme **“Powering ASEAN: Bridging Boundaries, Building Prosperity”**, aligned with Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN Chairmanship on Energy. This theme highlights the ASEAN Power Grid or APG as the special focus for this year to strengthen regional connectivity, marking a defining moment for ASEAN.

The Centre has been working on the APG since the establishment of our organisation in 1999. We work closely with the ASEAN Member States for the initiative, which was part of the ASEAN Vision 2020, envisioned in Kuala Lumpur in 1997. To date, seven interconnection projects have been commissioned under the APG, and additional lines are under various stages of development. Under the ASEAN Interconnection Masterplan Study III (AIMS III), eighteen priority projects have been identified.

To support implementation, ASEAN is currently finalising the Enhanced APG Memorandum of Understanding. The revised MOU reflects updated institutional arrangements, clearer coordination mechanisms, and broader investment considerations. It has been endorsed by the Senior Officials on Energy and is scheduled for signing by Energy Ministers at the 43rd ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting in October 2025.

To support ASEAN's ambition under the second objective of Strategic Goal 1 – Sustainable Infrastructure, which aims to increase public and private infrastructure investment in ASEAN Member States, it is estimated that the region requires at least USD 210 billion annually from 2023 to 2030. This substantial investment is essential to sustain economic growth, respond to climate change, and advance sustainable development. Addressing this scale of funding need calls for ASEAN to capitalise on private sector participation to help close the financing gap. In this regard, promoting innovative and blended financing mechanisms becomes vital to attract private and institutional capital for critical infrastructure projects. Strengthening project pipelines, building stronger business cases, enhancing regulatory clarity, and fostering public-private collaboration will be key enablers in accelerating infrastructure development across the region.

This year marks the Forum's twenty-fifth edition as a milestone that reflects a quarter-century of sustained collaboration. Over the years, AEBF has played a catalytic role in supporting cross-border grid development, investment planning, and sustainability initiatives that contribute to ASEAN's broader economic and energy goals. Held in conjunction with AMEM, the Forum brings together a broad range of stakeholders to exchange insights and advance collaboration on ASEAN's energy priorities.

Today's launch reflects our collective commitment to work together, address regional challenges, and realise a shared vision for a secure, sustainable, and inclusive energy future. We at ACE stand ready to continue supporting ASEAN's collective efforts in advancing regional cooperation, accelerating sustainable development, and ensuring energy security across the region. Together, we can shape a resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking energy future for the benefit of all ASEAN citizens.

Let me close by thanking Excellency and all distinguished guests for your presence and support at today's Launch. I look forward to welcoming you again at the 25th ASEAN Energy Business Forum this October.

Thank you.