



**PROPOSED WELCOMING REMARKS**

**FOR**

**YB SENATOR TENGKU DATUK SERI UTAMA ZAFRUL  
TENGKU ABDUL AZIZ  
MINISTER OF INVESTMENT, TRADE AND INDUSTRY  
MALAYSIA**

**TO BE DELIVERED DURING**

**WELCOMING DINNER FOR 31<sup>ST</sup> AEM RETREAT  
DELEGATES**

**ON**

**27 FEBRUARY 2025 (THURSDAY)**

**0830 PM -1000PM**

**AT**

**DESARU COAST CONFERENCE  
DESARU, JOHOR**

## PROGRAMME

TIME (PM)	ITINERARY
07:00	Arrival of Guests
07:40	Arrival of VVIPs <b>(VVIPs to the Holding Room)</b>
07:45	Launching of GRAB ASEAN Delegate Pass
08:05	Opening Speech: YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry
08:15	Dinner Starts
	Cultural Show and Performance by Yayasan Warisan Johor
09:15	Memento Giving Ceremony to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEMs)</li> <li>- YAB Datuk Onn Hafiz bin Ghazi, Chief Minister of Johor</li> </ul>
	Photo Opportunity
	Singing Session by AEMs
10:00	Dinner Ends
Side Event: Local Fruit Experience	

## **PROPOSED REMARKS**

**His Hon Dato' Onn Hafiz Ghazi**

Chief Minister of Johor

**His Excellencies ASEAN Economic Ministers**

**His Excellency Filipus Nino Pereira**

Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Timor-Leste

**His Excellency Dr. Kao Kim Hourn**

Secretary-General of ASEAN,

**His Hon. Liew Chin Tong**

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry

**Dato' Hairil Yahri Yaacob**

Secretary General, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry

**Esteemed strategic partners** of our ASEAN-related events

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, a warm Malaysia Madani welcome and a very good evening to all.

1. On behalf of Malaysia, welcome to Desaru, Johor! This is one Malaysian destination renowned for its beautiful beaches and breathtaking natural beauty. I believe **Desaru has welcomed many visitors from our next-door neighbour, Singapore.**
2. Now that the rest of you have seen how beautiful this place is, **the Chief Minister of this State, His Hon Dato' Onn Hafiz, and I look forward to welcoming more visitors from other ASEAN states** as well.
3. This remarkable setting will also be the backdrop for our Ministerial discussions tomorrow. The **31st ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Retreat**, scheduled for tomorrow, is a **crucial platform for fostering collaboration and dialogue among our esteemed ASEAN ministers.**
4. We must **chart ASEAN's economic trajectory, and carefully navigate our way in the changing world order, against major operational challenges.**

5. Indeed, Malaysia's Chairmanship happens to be at a **pivotal point for ASEAN** – at a point **where Trump 2.0, geopolitical and geo-economic tensions, ongoing wars and conflicts, rising multipolarity, and climate change** are collectively **disrupting ASEAN's sustainable growth**. Nevertheless, **we must stand united**, to spearhead efforts aimed at creating greater growth opportunities for the region.
6. It is against such a challenging backdrop that **Malaysia has proposed a set of carefully curated Priority Economic Deliverables (PEDs)** under our Chairmanship. We **hope to receive all countries' endorsement** during the Ministers' retreat tomorrow.
7. **It is important for us to collaborate closely so we can transform all these obstacles into opportunities** for inclusive and sustainable prosperity across ASEAN.
8. The PEDs reflect **our determination to collectively develop effective strategies that can leverage on each of our unique strengths** for ASEAN's greater good.

9. By working **together**, we have **better negotiating leverage** with our trading and investment partners, to foster innovation and build our member states' capacity. This is key to creating a **sustainable and resilient economic framework**.
10. This will also enable us to **tackle current issues**, prepare ourselves for **future challenges and opportunities**, as well as position **ASEAN as a reliable and dynamic player in the global economy**.
11. One **key narrative** is to **promote ASEAN** as the world's **manufacturing and services hub**, but **in a way that utilises our workers and natural resources fairly AND equitably**. This is why we have chosen **Inclusivity and Sustainability** as our Chairmanship's theme.
12. I am also happy to share that, **Malaysia, as Chair, is strongly advocating for the accession of Timor-Leste into ASEAN**.
13. Historically, Malaysia has played a pivotal role in the inclusion of several other ASEAN Member States (AMS) into this regional bloc. This year, once again we are **prepared to take on a leading role in facilitating Timor-Leste's application** as the 11th member of ASEAN.

14. I do not wish to speak for very long. I am pleased to host **this dinner, prepared by our Ministry in collaboration with the Johor Government.** An exquisite spread and a local fruit experience await you. So, do enjoy the rich culinary and cultural experience that our team has curated for all delegates.

Selamat Menjamu Selera! Have a pleasant evening ahead.

Thank you.