

His Excellency Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee
ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General of Social Cultural Community

Mr. Joey Concepcion, the ASEAN BAC Chair and host of ABIS, Dr. Shariha Kahlid, Executive Director of the Impact Hub Kuala Lumpur and organizer of ASEAN Impact Challenge, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to all of you. It is my pleasure to be here at the awarding ceremonies of the ASEAN Impact Challenge today and I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to be here speaking with you.

Also, I am happy to see that the finalists and winners of this year also took part in this important celebration.

I've been told by Dr. Shariha a while ago that we have a quite fascinating that we have 19 teams and 1200 individuals of all 10 ASEAN member-states. I think this is remarkable achievement. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the involvement of the private sector, mentorship role of innovation what it can do to help us propel in the integration process of ASEAN community building.

I congratulate this ASEAN Impact Challenge event and really, the important part of this is it also highlights how we can come together with ideas and innovation and to promote sustainable development

Your participation and success in this year's challenge under the theme "Inclusive Innovations" strengthen the desire and aspiration for better engagement to get the contribution of new generation of innovators in ASEAN.

For inclusiveness, which is one of the objectives of the ASEAN nations is moving ahead.

The integration process of the ASEAN community cannot be fully realized if it is only in the economic development. It is important we emphasize the importance of the role of human resource development.

Here, I would like to echo the wise words of Her Excellency Aung San Suu Kyi earlier, when she emphasized the importance of investing in people. I could not agree more. Investing in education. Investing in young people. But also encourage them to create a conducive environment for them where innovation for them where prosper.

I am also excited that this exercise shows the importance of how we move ahead with the implementation of the SDGs. From the point of view of the ASEAN Secretariat we would really

like to promote what we call the complementarities between the ASEAN 2025, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the SDGs. I think there is the synergies and the twin goal of achieving sustainability here and particularly through innovation incubated by the catalyst role of the private sector and the nurturing and enabling role of the government.

I congratulate all awardees for taking our challenge. I encourage you to sustain your pursuit in the same direction so as to engage everyone on this journey and to leave no one behind.

Let me assure you that ASEAN have been doing our fair share, again by moving ahead with the ASEAN vision 2025, inclusive in our approach and engaging and promoting complementarities also with SDGs.

This is the kind of regional collaboration and synergy that we would like to see happening going forward. We see that continued engagement in this process, your continued engagement with ASEAN in inclusive innovation will contribute to enhancing the synergy between governments, private sectors, CSO, and the citizens of ASEAN towards inclusive innovation in the years to come

I wish you all a continued success in the future. Thank you.