

OPENING REMARKS AT THE SEVENTH REGIONAL SEMINAR ON GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

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Honourable Datuk Hj. Mustafar bin Hj. Ali, Director of Investigation of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), Honourable Dato Abdul Wahab Abdul Aziz, Director of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy, honourable guests, distinguished experts and participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to announce the opening of the Seventh Regional Seminar on Good Governance for Southeast Asian Countries. I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to the honourable guests, distinguished speakers and participants who have come to join this significant forum.

UNAFEI has held the Good Governance Seminar annually since 2007. This year is the seventh Good Governance Seminar, held in Kuala Lumpur, and it is being co-hosted by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to the Government of Malaysia, especially to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy, for their great contributions and assistance in co-hosting this seminar.

The main theme of this seminar is “Enhancing Investigative Ability in Corruption Cases”. Needless to say, just criminalizing various forms of corruption is meaningless. For us, as law enforcement officers and government attorneys, the most effective measure to eradicate corruption is exposing each case of corruption, exposing each wrongdoer, and bringing such criminals to justice. That includes imposing the appropriate punishment on each offender.

However, many challenges arise in investigating and prosecuting corruption cases, such as undue pressure from powerful politicians and public officials, difficulties obtaining objective evidence and so forth. We must regrettably admit that corruption cases are still prevalent, and we have not succeeded in investigating and prosecuting all corruption cases. High investigative ability and techniques are necessary to overcome those challenges.

Now, let’s recall the date of 31 October 2003, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Since then, 10 years have passed. I quote the words that Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General, jubilantly wrote in the foreword, “The new Convention is a remarkable achievement, and it complements another landmark instrument, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which entered into force just a month ago. It is balanced, strong and pragmatic, and it offers a new framework for effective action and international cooperation.” Indeed, UNCAC has inspired strong political will to fight against corruption in many countries.

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During these ten years, such countries have made tremendous efforts to strengthen their legal and regulatory regimes and to make use of various and powerful measures introduced by UNCAC and UNTOC. I believe that we are steadily moving forward to defeat the vice of corruption by “Enhancing Investigative Ability in Corruption Cases”.

This forum is a good opportunity for us to exchange knowledge and good practices in investigating corruption cases based on the experience of your respective countries. Of course, there are still differences in legal regimes and rules, but the lessons learned through the investigation of specific cases should lead us beyond such differences to improve the investigative methods of each country.

Finally, I hope that the discussion at this seminar will strengthen international cooperation and help each participant clear higher hurdles in the investigation of corruption cases in the future.

Thank you very much for your attention.