

**Welcome Remarks**  
**by H.E. Le Luong Minh,**  
**Secretary-General of ASEAN**  
**at the Photo Exhibition ‘Historical Links**  
**between India and Southeast Asia’**  
**13 February 2014, ASEAN Secretariat**

Excellency, Mr. Gurjit Singh, Ambassador of India to ASEAN,  
Excellencies, Members of the CPR and Ambassadors to ASEAN,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to the opening of the photographic exhibition on the **Historical Links between India and Southeast Asia**, a showcase of photographs depicting the long-standing interactions of people and cultures between India and the ASEAN region.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Gurjit Singh and his staff for their initiative and dedication in mounting this wonderful exhibition.

In the backdrop of their fascinating landscapes and diverse ethnicities, both Southeast Asia and India are dynamic and fast growing economic regions. With their shared histories and cultures - straddling between tradition and modernity - they both make up probably two of the most fascinating regions in the world.

As an ASEAN national who has spent part of my youth when people tend to be most open to ideas and objective realities, I have seen and experienced for myself the rich interplay of these two vibrant cultures.

Thus, I welcome this exhibition which gives us all an opportunity to share in the same experience and realization I had many years ago. With such memories and images, may we be reminded of our shared past to understand our present. Looking forward, may we also dream the myriad of possibilities for greater engagement between India and ASEAN in the future.

Recalling the ASEAN-India Cultural Night we had at the ASEAN Secretariat in November 2012, which was also organized under Ambassador Gurjit's able helm, this exhibit continues the celebration of our shared cultures and histories. Following India's efforts, I wish that other missions to ASEAN will also co-organize more cultural exchange programs for us to get to know each other better as we together strive for shared lofty goals of peace, stability and prosperity for our peoples.

On this note, I would like to invite everybody to take some time to see and enjoy these photographs. I hope that they will not only amaze us but also provoke both reflection and inspiration from us all.

Have a good evening!