

## **Full Speech - Draft**

**WELCOME REMARKS BY  
DATUK SERI DR. ABDUL FATTAH ABDULLAH  
PRESIDENT OF ANGKASA &  
ASEAN CO-OPERATIVE ORGANIZATION (ACO)**

**OPENING OF ASEAN COOPERATIVE DIALOGUE  
(ACD) 2025**

**13TH MAY 2025  
SUNWAY RESORT HOTEL, SUNWAY CITY,  
PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA**

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi  
Wabarakatuh,

**Honorable YB Datuk Ewon Benedick,  
Minister of Entrepreneur and Cooperative  
Development,**

**Distinguished Government Representatives,  
Leaders of Apex Cooperative Bodies,  
Esteemed Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is my honor to welcome all of you to the  
ASEAN Cooperative Dialogue (ACD) 2025.

This is a historic moment for the entire ASEAN cooperative movement. We gather here today as cooperative leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders with one shared objective: to elevate the status of cooperatives in ASEAN's economic framework.

2. A big thank you to Datuk Ewon Benedick, Minister of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development for his continuous support in strengthening cooperatives as a key driver of economic development.
3. Across ASEAN, we represent over 65 million members, millions of businesses, and billions in economic activity. We are actively engaged in agriculture, finance, retail, digital services, and tourism. We provide employment to millions and offer financial security to those left out of the traditional banking system.
4. As the President of ANGKASA and ASEAN Co-operative Organization (ACO), I stand before you today to request greater recognition for cooperatives. We must work

together to ensure that cooperatives are treated as a core pillar of ASEAN's economic development.

5. ACO, as the unifying body for cooperatives in ASEAN, has been working endlessly for this recognition. But we cannot do it alone. We need the support of all ASEAN governments, apex cooperative bodies, and policymakers to elevate ACO to an accredited ASEAN entity. This will allow ACO to directly engage with ASEAN decision-makers, shape policies, and ensure that cooperatives receive the support they rightfully deserve.

6. We must push for the establishment of an ASEAN Cooperative Ministerial Meeting (ACMM) to provide cooperatives with an official platform, similar to what Small Medium Enterprises already have. The time for discussions is over—the time for action is now.

7. I urge all delegates here today—representatives from governments, apex bodies, and related agencies—to take a

firm stand. Let this dialogue be more than just speeches and discussions. Let it be the beginning of a new era where cooperatives are finally given their rightful place in ASEAN's economic agenda.

8. With that, I extend my deepest appreciation to the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Development, ANGKASA, ACO, and all our partners for making this event possible. Let us work together to create an ASEAN where cooperatives are recognized, supported, and empowered.

9. Thank you, and I wish all of you a fruitful dialogue ahead.

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