

**Welcome remarks by H.E. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Chair of 14th ACD Ministerial Meeting
The Siam Kempinski Hotel
10 March 2016, 09:30 – 17:00 hrs.**

**Distinguished Colleagues,
Good morning,**

I would like to officially welcome all of you to our Ministerial Retreat. As ACD Chair and host of the 14th ACD Ministerial Meeting, I am honoured by the opportunity to lead our discussion today.

On behalf of all ACD Member States, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Kingdom of Nepal as the 34th ACD Member State and take this opportunity to invite Nepal to participate in today's dialogue. I am convinced that Nepal's expertise and experience in the region will further enhance our international profile and unique identity as a continent-wide cooperation.

In addition, it is my pleasure to express our joint appreciation to United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the offer to be the next ACD Chair and the host of the 15th ACD Ministerial Meeting. We believe that under your future chairmanship, the momentum in ACD cooperation will be greater enhanced.

Prior to proceeding to the adoption of agenda, allow me to say a few words about Thailand's expectation for the 14th ACD Ministerial Meeting.

First and foremost, I would like to highlight that it is our intention to arrange this year's Ministerial Meeting in a **retreat format** for we believe that simplicity and comfort levels among participants are two distinguished characteristics of ACD. Recalling the founding directives of ACD founders, Thailand views that ACD should be a high-level platform where our leaders and Ministers can informally exchange their **forward-looking vision** towards the development of Asia in all creative dimensions.

Second, apart from discussing elements based on our theme "ACD – The Way Forward" such as ACD Vision 2030, ACD Regional Connectivity, and ways to enhance ACD Mechanism that correspond to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, we should aim to reinforce our private sector in a more innovative and inclusive manner. Establishing a wide-ranging channel for **new public-private partnership** that can provide ample room for interactions among ACD private sectors, governments, and most importantly our people will eventually ensure a brighter path to success for the Dialogue.

These are some essential steps that will raise the current momentum of our regional cooperation and give ACD a more concrete direction in propelling

economic growth and sustainability of Asia. I also count on your proactive contribution at this Ministerial Retreat for our collective effort will be a powerful thrust which can bring in ground-breaking ideas and innovations to our region.

Lastly, we will adopt a Chairman's Statement as the outcome of our Ministerial Retreat today which summarizes all agendas and decisions rendered at this Ministerial Meeting.

Dear Colleagues,

Through our **positive thinking and combined strengths**, I am certain that we will make a constructive and fruitful progress in our Retreat today to shape a new future for ACD and prepare us for the 2nd ACD Summit and beyond.

Thank you.