

AUN Executive Director, Choltis Dhirathiti, PhD

Address to the Orientation Day of the *AUN-Daejeon University Exchange Programme: Fostering ASEAN Future Leaders Programme 2017/2018*, at Daejeon University,

Daejeon, Republic of Korea

Friday, 1 September 2017

Dr. Bonghwan Lee, Dean of International Relations Office, Daejeon University;

The ASEAN scholars and ASEAN faculty;

To the rest of the Daejeon University professors and staff;

And most of all to our 20 Young ASEAN Ambassadors;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning -

Today marks a very special day for all of us to present in this occasion because today another achievement has been fulfilled, and another partnership and collaboration has been strengthened between two regions: ASEAN and the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, today is also when we welcome the 14th batch of the AUN-DJU Exchange Programme.

AUN-DJU Exchange Programme is one of the most successful student mobility programme between ASEAN and Korea. A programme that can be traced back to its first initiation in 2002 and probably is the oldest undergraduate student exchange between the two regions, ASEAN and Republic of Korea. Hence, this programme symbolizes the strong cooperation between ASEAN and Korea being strengthened every year through our people-to-people ambassadors: youths like each one of you. Since its beginnings, the programme has produced 247 alumni, who have been pursuing their study and career paths both in the governmental and private sectors.

Most of you might be wondering, of all the people who applied in the programme, why me? Why did AUN and DJU select me? We selected you for two main reasons: first you have demonstrated through your stay in your home universities the qualification that best describes the ASEAN youth of today, and second, we believe in your sincerity to help develop our region. With these, I have 3 special requests to all of you:

1. Kindly remember that you are not just representing yourself nor just your university, you are the ambassador of your respective countries, and above all, the ASEAN region as a whole. Therefore, whatever you do will reflect on the image that you will make on behalf of ASEAN. Sixty percent of the 600 Million population of the region are from the youth sector, now their image are in your hands, so kindly represent them well.
2. As much as possible, engage in as many activities as possible in Daejeon University because this will give you a chance to build relationship with the youths of Korea. Since you are our ambassadors, we expect you to serve as a link between the two regions, therefore, we hope that you will bridge the gap of misunderstandings and, of course, serve as our endorser of our region to the Korean people.
3. And lastly, please absorb all of the knowledge that this experience will give you. Because the knowledge that you will gain in this programme will equip you with the abilities that you will soon use to give back to your home countries and I do hope that

you have that desire to help your country. Helping your country is a way of helping the region in general.

Again, I would like to congratulate all of 20 students on being a part of this programme and I would like to convey my appreciation to you who have accepted the challenge to be our ASEAN Youth Ambassadors. I do hope that you will maximize your stay in the Republic of Korea and will make this a year that you will forever treasure in your life.

My deepest gratitude is extended to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Republic of Korea, and Daejeon University, particularly through the untiring support of the ex-President of Daejeon University, Prof. Yong-Chul Lim, who had been playing the key role in building up this legacy and gave our ASEAN Youth the privilege and opportunity to achieve their potential that will, in the future, help the region. In this connection, I am pleased to learn that President Jongseo Lee, the new President of DJU, would continue the support and further strengthen the partnership between Korea and ASEAN.

To the professors and staff of the Fostering ASEAN Future Leaders Programme, I cannot thank you enough for your generosity and effort in taking good care of our ASEAN students. Your commitments are invaluable and meaningful to us.

To our 20 Youth Ambassadors, I wish you every success and all your aspirations be fulfilled in one year here at Daejeon University.

Finally, for ASEAN University Network (AUN), please be assured of our cooperation and proactive secretariat. We are at your disposal and looking forward to our strong partnership.