

The Honourable Chairman, Attorney Ly Chantola,  
Honourable President of ALA, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon,  
The Honourable Secretary General of ALA  
The Honourable Chairs of ALA National Committees,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh* and a good afternoon to you all.

It is with great pleasure and honour, that I attend this virtual meeting of the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Law Association Governing Council and I would like to, first and foremost, express my gratitude and extend my congratulations to ALA Cambodia for convening and running this meeting.

It is unfortunate that we are still in the throes of the COVID-19 outbreak, for otherwise we would be having this meeting in the beautiful and historic city of Siem Reap. Nevertheless, the fact that we are still gathered today, although virtually, marks our commitment to carry on with our mission despite the present challenges, and on this note, I would also like to extend my thanks

to the ALA Secretariat for the continuing support and smooth coordination as well as preparation of the papers for the meeting.

Honourable Chairman, Honourable President, Esteemed Delegates,

Since its establishment in 1979, ALA has evolved and transformed itself into a prominent entity in the legal world through its various initiatives as well as actively working alongside ASEAN as part of the ASEAN Blueprint 2025. A good example of ALA's increasing importance and contribution to the region is the recent engagement with the ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting ("ASLOM") Working Group on the Harmonization of ASEAN Trade Laws regarding proposed Guidelines on Best Practices on the Enforcement of Arbitral Awards in ASEAN which received positive response. It is initiatives such as these that further ALA's objectives and I am confident that ALA will continue to make an impact for many years to come.

Our meeting today has a number of important matters for our consideration and action, mostly revolving around impacts and challenges we are facing as a result of the pandemic which I think we can all agree have been far reaching and of a serious nature.

In such circumstances, ALA provides an invaluable platform for us to share and learn from one another and I hope we can make the most of the time we have with our esteemed colleagues to find workable solutions for these issues.

Although there are many initiatives that are certainly worth mentioning, bearing in mind the time, I would like to take the opportunity to state my support and strong agreement with the initiatives regarding the investment in and development of human capital in particular, which is a crucial area for the further development of the region. As such, I look forward to the endorsements of initiatives such as the holding of Moot Competitions among ASEAN law students, the establishment of an ASEAN Law Centre, and the concept paper to promote awareness of ASEAN Law and the development of the ASEAN Lawyer.

I look forward to the many discussions waiting to be had and working together with all of you towards achieving the objectives of this esteemed Association.

Thank you.