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**APEC High Level Dialogue on
Anti-Corruption Cooperation
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KEYNOTE SPEECH

APEC HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ANTI-CORRUPTION COOPERATION

**DEPUTY CHIEF COMMISSIONER (OPERATION)
MALAYSIAN ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION**

**INCHEON
REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and a very good morning.

1. It is a privilege to address this distinguished gathering at the APEC High Level Dialogue on Anti-Corruption Cooperation. I thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for its warm hospitality and commend its leadership in advancing this year's APEC theme "Building a Sustainable Tomorrow: Connect, Innovate, Prosper".
2. As corruption risks become more complex and interconnected across borders, Malaysia remains firmly committed to the APEC Anti-Corruption and Transparency Working Group (ACTWG) and to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Our Malaysia reforms are grounded in integrity, accountability, and sustained collaboration.

Advancing Reform in Malaysia

3. Malaysia's National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) for the period from 2024 to 2028 builds on the achievements of our earlier National Anti-Corruption Plan. That plan achieved a 77

percent implementation rate. The current strategy takes a whole of government and whole of society approach. It is structured around five strategic pillars, namely Education, Public Accountability, Voice of the People, Enforcement, and Incentives, with 60 sub strategies involving 19 key agencies.

4. As of May 2025, Malaysia has successfully implemented the first 10 sub strategies. These include mandatory integrity training for senior civil servants, improved internal audits, reforms in pre-employment screening, and stronger governance at border entry points. Oversight is ensured through a digital monitoring dashboard led by the National Governance Planning Division under the Prime Minister's Department.
5. These reforms are aligned with our goal of positioning Malaysia among the top 25 economies in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index by 2033. This goal is ambitious, but we believe it is achievable with sustained political will, public participation, and international engagement.

Lessons from the 1MDB Case

6. Malaysia's experience in the 1MDB case offers powerful lessons on the complexity of asset recovery and the necessity of deep,

sustained international cooperation. To date, the Government of Malaysia has successfully recovered approximately 29.79 billion Malaysian Ringgit, or 6.93 billion US dollars, from the estimated 42 billion Malaysian Ringgit misappropriated from 1MDB. This represents one of the largest recovery efforts in global corruption history.

7. Tracing these assets was not straightforward. Illicit funds were routed through multiple jurisdictions using sophisticated financial layering, shell companies, offshore accounts, nominee directors, and trust structures. Secrecy havens such as the British Virgin Islands, Seychelles, and Luxembourg obscured ownership trails, while emerging methods such as cryptocurrency wallets and proxy accounts further complicated the asset tracing process. These tactics deliberately hindered transparency, making it extremely difficult to identify the ultimate beneficial owners.
8. Legal and institutional barriers were also substantial. Variations in evidentiary standards across economies, delayed responses to Mutual Legal Assistance requests, and limited access to financial intelligence all posed significant obstacles. Some jurisdictions required extensive documentation before acting,

while others lacked accessible registers of beneficial ownership. In several cases, key suspects held foreign citizenship or resided overseas, requiring lengthy diplomatic engagement and cooperation for extradition or legal actions.

9. Despite these challenges, international collaboration was pivotal. Malaysia worked closely with enforcement authorities in the United States, Singapore, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, France, and others. This cooperation led to the identification and seizure of high-value assets, including luxury real estate, jewellery, private jets, and film rights such as those linked to *The Wolf of Wall Street*. Most recently, MACC, in partnership with the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, secured the return of 20 million US dollars from a solar energy project linked to 1MDB. These outcomes demonstrate that with political will, intelligence sharing, and aligned legal cooperation, asset recovery on a global scale is not only feasible but essential.

Regional Priorities under APEC

10. In this context, Malaysia proposes three regional priorities to enhance the effectiveness of APEC's anti-corruption agenda.

11. First, enhance the capacity and function of ACT NET as a platform for real time intelligence exchange. APEC economies must prioritise secure communication channels and early warning alerts that can support timely enforcement actions and operational cooperation.
12. Second, strengthen asset recovery cooperation through shared protocols and fast-tracked assistance. Malaysia supports the APEC Recommendations on Asset Recovery and calls for deeper harmonisation in freezing orders, evidentiary standards, and legal recognition of confiscation measures across jurisdictions.
13. Third, promote the responsible use of technology in detection and prevention. Artificial intelligence, blockchain analysis, and forensic accounting software can uncover hidden patterns in public procurement and financial flows. However, they must be applied with safeguards to prevent misuse and ensure transparency.

ASEAN Leadership and Collaboration

14. The year 2025 is a significant one for Malaysia, as we assume the Chair of ASEAN under the theme “Inclusivity and Sustainability.” In alignment with this leadership, the Malaysian Anti-

Corruption Commission is honoured to serve as Chair and host of the 21st ASEAN Parties Against Corruption, or ASEAN-PAC, Principals Meeting from 28 to 30 October 2025.

15. ASEAN-PAC, formerly known as the South East Asia Parties Against Corruption, was established in 2004 and formally recognised as an accredited Entity Associated with ASEAN in 2017. Over the past two decades, it has grown into a vital platform for dialogue, mutual learning, and institutional development, aligned with the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
16. The 21st ASEAN-PAC Meeting will carry the theme “Strengthening ASEAN Unity: Public-Private Partnerships to Combat Corruption,” reflecting our shared commitment to inclusive governance. Malaysia’s leadership this year will feature not only the formal plenary of anti-corruption agency heads but also a half-day exhibition showcasing Malaysia’s prevention efforts, a multi-stakeholder dialogue with civil society and the private sector, and an excursion to interesting and well-known places.

Closing

17. Distinguished delegates, corruption threatens governance, erodes public trust, and undermines sustainable growth. Our responses must be bold, collective, and future focused.
18. In closing, let us reaffirm our shared responsibility to uphold the rule of law and eliminate corruption in all its forms. Strengthening ACTWG and ACT NET must go beyond cooperation in principle to cooperation in practice by enabling joint investigations, accelerating asset recovery, and protecting the integrity of our institutions. Together, we can build an Asia Pacific region where anti-corruption is not just a goal, but a defining standard of our cooperation and development.
19. Malaysia remains ready to collaborate, share expertise, and support regional efforts in building transparent, inclusive, and resilient institutions.

Thank you and gam saham nida!