

**SPEECH AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW
DATABASE OF ASEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAW DOCUMENTS**

Centre for International Law, Singapore

March 18, 2010

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors to ASEAN
Professor Walter Woon, Attorney-General of Singapore
Mr. Joseph Mullinix, Deputy President of the National University of Singapore
Professor Robert Beckman, the Director of the Centre for International Law, CIL
Governing Board Members,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honor and privilege for me to be invited to address all of you this afternoon on the occasion of the launch of the CIL Documents Database. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Centre for International Law for the invitation to the ASEAN Secretariat and sincerely thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of this inaugural launch.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, ASEAN has become a rules based organization with the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter on 15 December 2008. Laws and regulations provide the basis of understanding and agreement upon which ASEAN will move forward to achieve its mission of “One Vision, One Identity, and One Community”.

Access to ASEAN and international law documents is therefore very crucial for the peoples of ASEAN to understand the role of ASEAN. It is undeniable that in today’s society, e-resources are the fastest, most accessible and cheapest method of access to any data. Databases are fundamental to modern legal research, both as archives and, via manipulation of their contents, as research tools in their own right.

The CIL, with its state-of-the-art central database system which publicly posts most, if not yet, of the ASEAN documentation is massively scalable and can support matters involving multiple terabytes (TBs) of data.

No doubt, the CIL Documents Database will improve access to legal instruments of ASEAN in Singapore, in the ASEAN region and globally. With more than 200 selected ASEAN documents now already included in the database, this database demonstrate CIL’ in-depth knowledge of the

e-discovery process, and signals that CIL is seriously committed about serving the most pressing needs on the access instruments not just regionally, but globally!

The CIL database is definitely yet another connectivity tool that will connect the people to ASEAN and ASEAN to the people. This will enable persons with access to the system to quickly and thoroughly parse through mountains of data to find the relevant documents. Wirth this easy access database, I am confident that the number of users of the database will in no time mount to levels beyond the expectation.

During his visit to the ASEAN Secretariat in early January this year, Professor Beckman had also advised the Secretariat that CIL was planning a major research project on “Integration through law: The ASEAN Way in a Comparative Context”. We are indeed eager to understand the outcomes of the research and the Secretariat. If required, I would be more than happy to discuss future collaboration on this research project.

Allow me, to express my personal admiration. As a lawyer, I have gone through many Centers for International Law that range from the Columbia University, University of Beirut and also Utrecht University in Holland.

Now this afternoon, I feel like “Alice in Wonderland”. Everything is new, I meet new friends, and new hope and I find new expectation. With this we can establish a better world to live through enhanced connectivity. Peoples in ASEAN cannot wait any longer. Let us proceed with research projects.

Last January, when I met Professor Beckman, I said, if The Hague is “Mecca for International Law”, now I would like to announce that Singapore is “Mecca for ASEAN Law”.

With this note, I take this opportunity to congratulate CIL and the National University of Singapore for being the first institution in the ASEAN region with publicly available comprehensive database of ASEAN and international law documents. In this context, I hope that the CIL and the National University of Singapore could facilitate in providing the ASEAN Secretariat with free and easy access to ASEAN and international law documents and resources. I thank you for your attention.

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