

PRESS RELEASE

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AMBASSADOR MINDA CALAGUIAN-CRUZ VISITS DARWIN, NT WITH OTHER ASEAN HEADS OF MISSION

Upon the invitation of the Northern Territory Government, Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz participated in the Official Visit to the Northern Territory of the ASEAN Heads of Mission from 3 to 6 April 2016 in Darwin, Northern Territory. Eight other Heads of Mission from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the Deputy Chief of Mission of Singapore, participated in the program. It marked the first time that the NT Government has invited the ASEAN Heads of Mission under its Open Territory Program, which showcases NT's business and trade opportunities, and its close trade links with ASEAN.

Australia's Northern Territory has a long history of engagement with ASEAN Member States, and the establishment of the ASEAN Community offers tremendous opportunities for further developing the Northern Territory's economic, political and cultural engagement with its northern neighbors. Deputy Chief Minister Peter Styles, in his capacity as the Northern Territory's Minister for Asian Engagement and Trade, highlighted the Northern Territory's strategic location as Australia's gateway to Asia. Its well-developed resource, agricultural and tourism sectors provide ample opportunity for investment, while its reputation for quality goods and services underpins the Northern Territory's status as a reliable market and valuable trade and investment partner.

Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz underscored that the newly-formed ASEAN Community is auspiciously placed to engage NT given the expected robust growth provided by the closer economic integration of ASEAN Member States, and given ASEAN's high consumption activities, young workforce and increasing disposable incomes. Connectivity is an ideal way to jumpstart ASEAN-NT cooperation, in the mould of the Roll-On-Roll-Off (RORO) project between the Philippines and Indonesia. She emphasized that since all governments have innate constraints, the private sector must step up to realize the full potential of cooperation, and personal linkages and people-to-people relations are keys to sustaining the gains from these platforms of engagement.

The Visit included various presentations by Government agencies such as the NT Departments of the Chief Minister, Business and Education, the Northern Australia Development Office, and the Northern Command of the Australian Defence Force, as well as the private sector, namely the Chamber of Commerce Northern Territory, the International Business Council, the National Critical Care and Trauma Centre, Menzies Health Research Institute, Charles Darwin University, and the Port of Darwin.



Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz with Deputy Chief Minister Styles and other ASEAN Heads of Mission



The ASEAN Heads of Mission with Mr. Luke Bowen of the Northern Australia Development Office (1st from left) and Mr. Mark Darby of the Department of Education (2nd row, 1st from left) at the Territory Conference Room, Development House.



The ASEAN Heads of Mission in discussions with Deputy Chief Minister Peter Styles at the Parliament House



The ASEAN Heads of Mission with His Honour the Honourable John Hardy OAM (5th from left), Administrator of the Northern Territory at the Government House.