

ASEAN Centrality Needs to Be Enhanced

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ASEAN countries are expected to maintain ASEAN centrality.

“ASEAN centrality needs to be maintained. All members of ASEAN are expected to have the stance of one single ASEAN,” said Secretary of ASEAN Cooperation Directorate in Foreign Affairs Ministry, Vedi Kurnia Buana, when becoming speaker in *International Conference On ASEAN Studies (ICON) 2019* at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM on Wednesday (13/3).

The ASEAN centrality, he said, had to be enhanced by member countries amidst the world power constellation and ASEAN had to play its roles.

He said ASEAN was facing the dynamics of major powers. Thus, he said it was important to develop a common concept of ASEAN on the Indo-Pacific cooperation. “On the Indo-Pacific concept ASEAN has to have its own concept,” he said.

Japanese Ambassador to ASEAN, H.E. Kazuo Sunaga, explained the Japan’s policy on *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy* (FOIP). This, he said, was key to achieving stability and prosperity of



international community. One of the goals is to bridge connectivity between Asia and Africa.

“The policy looks at Asia and Africa as well as Pacific and Indian Oceans, hence Japan promotes cooperation for common welfare,” he said.

He also explained the cooperation between Japan and ASEAN that had started since 1973 with Japan being the first partner. The partnership continued to get stronger and flourish. He said ASEAN had been Japan’s partner in realising common welfare and promoting peace and stability in the region as well as being an important trade partner. He added ASEAN is a favourite for Japan investment. “ASEAN is Japan’s strategic partner,” he said.

The international seminar was run by ASEAN Studies Center of the Faculty in collaboration with Faculty of Law UGM and Center for Asian Legal Exchange of Nagoya University. Over 100 participants from academics and practitioners joined the event.

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