

UGM and Foreign Affairs Ministry Launch Centre for Asean Studies

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Director of Asean Cooperation, Foreign Affairs Ministry, I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Rector of UGM, Prof. Dr. Pratikno, M.Soc., Sc, and Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Dr. Erwan Agus Purwanto, have inaugurated the ASEAN Studies Centre, marked by the seminar "Toward A More Cohesive and people-Oriented ASEAN: 2015 and Beyond" in UGM Graduate School on Tuesday (30/4).

Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja said the Centre has an important role for Indonesia. It will prepare teaching staff and students for Asean Community 2015. "ASEAN is the political pillar for Indonesia. We had not given more focus on this earlier. Thailand, the U.S., Australia and China have the Centre for a long time," he said.

He said ASEAN Studies Centre are also established in Universitas Airlangga, Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Hassanudin and Universitas Andalas. "Speaking of Asean with its three pillars, each university can prepare itself whether in political, economic or socio-cultural pillars. Hassanudin has declared its concentration on economic studies," he added.

On Asean Community 2015, Prof. Pratikno said Indonesia would not withdraw itself. With the huge population and region, Indonesia hopes to become Asia's leader. Moreover, latest economic developments showed that Indonesia has joined the second group after India, China and Brazil. After becoming 16 biggest economy, Indonesia expects to reach the big 10 in the next few years.

"UGM is concerned to back up the world community, particularly in Asean. How to lead the big size,

having the potential to become the leader,” he said.

Dr. Erwan Agus Purwanto added that the Centre would academically encourage educators and students and the general public to understand ASEAN issues in terms of politics, economy and socio-culture. It is expected to prepare the young generation to play a role in the Asean Community in 2015.

“As part of Asean community, we need to mutually understand each other to prevent misunderstanding and to maintain political stability,” he said.

According to Erwan, in its early development the focus of the Centre was to encourage people awareness that in no time they would become part of the global community, Asean 2015. Academically, this would create an outward looking vision among students. “Thus, curriculum improvement needs to be made in all study programmes in the Faculty, even in some relevant Faculties.”

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