



**Welcoming Remarks by Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa, CSCAP Co-Chair,
Opening Session of 10th CSCAP General Conference
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
22 October 2015**

H.E. Gonchigdorj Radnasumberel
Vice Chairman and Member of the State Great Hural of Mongolia,

Mr. Ralph Cossa
CSCAP Co-Chair,

Dr Ganbat Damba
Director, CSCAP Mongolia,

Chairpersons of CSCAP Member Committees,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

On behalf of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and my Co-Chair, Ralph Cossa, let me welcome you to the 10th CSCAP General Conference. We are delighted that the General Conference is being held in Ulaanbaatar. We commend our hosts, CSCAP Mongolia, for their hard work in putting together this event and the 44th CSCAP Steering Committee Meeting which was successfully held yesterday. We also thank them for their warm welcome and gracious hospitality as well as for the rare and delightful opportunity to visit this intriguing country. Many of us are first time visitors to Mongolia. We aim to make full use of our stay to understand more of this country; its people, history and culture.

I also wish to record our sincere thanks and appreciation to CSCAP China and The Asia Foundation for their support in helping make this event a promising one.

CSCAP Mongolia has been very much part of CSCAP. We value their contribution to the work of CSCAP. I hope that following this General Conference, CSCAP Mongolia would be more active in CSCAP. For the members of CSCAP from other countries present here, I am sure there will be many take-aways from this General Conference as well as fond memories of our visit to Ulaanbaatar.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 9th CSCAP General Conference was convened in Beijing in 2013. At that conference we discussed the evolving geostrategic environment in the Asia-Pacific spanning the maritime trade routes of centuries past to the information superhighways of cyber space.

Many of the issues and challenges we deliberated two years ago persist. In some areas, there has been progress. In others, there remains much work to be done. The competition-cooperation dynamic that characterizes major power relations continues to colour the regional strategic landscape. It pervades engagement at sea, in the air, and in cyberspace: from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia, even to Europe and Central Asia. It also impacts, and feeds off, on smaller state interactions in the region, triggering questions about how existing multilateral security frameworks like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) should adapt and respond to these changes.

It is therefore fitting that this 10th General Conference is now held in the land of Chinggis Khaan, a figure who stood tall in the annals of man for bringing together different peoples from vast expanses of land in the Eurasian continent under a single empire where, in the context of today's world, the very concepts and practices that concern us today would apply: trade and commerce, cultural exchanges and cross-cultural activities, connectivity, peace and diplomacy, and security architecture.

The theme for our conference is "Confidence Building in the Asia-Pacific: The Security Architecture of the 21st Century". Today and tomorrow we will be discussing matters such as postures, connectivity, and cooperation at a time when governments, businesses, scholars and think-tankers are excited about matters such as the ASEAN Community; Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); One Belt One Road (OBOR); TPP, RCEP and FTAAP, and concepts such as the Indo-Pacific regional architecture.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Two years ago, we discussed the importance of water security. Two years on, we are reminded more plainly that notions of security stretch beyond traditional preoccupations of borders and sovereignty. The suffocating haze that has enveloped Malaysia, Singapore and parts of Indonesia for months now as well as environmental pollution in other parts of the Asia Pacific, and the growing scarcity of natural resources like water, would clearly impress upon us just how fragile the nexus between the environment and security is. Importantly, it underscores how there must be greater cooperation and coordination in managing these challenges not only between states but also among states, the private sector, and civil society. It goes without saying that CSCAP has a vital role to play in this regard.

Nowhere is the concept of comprehensive security more obvious and urgent than in preventing and countering violent extremism. In this connection, we have been witness to a bizarre and

disturbing phenomenon for many months already unfolding in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. When promising young minds are lured to brutal, gory ends by groups like the so-called Islamic State, then it is the job not only of governments but all parts of the community - the family unit, clerics, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations - to buttress society's resilience against extremism. Each one of us has a role to play. The ARF has given due attention to this problem as reflected in the discussions at the last ARF Meeting in Kuala Lumpur. CSCAP should be able to support the ARF in this regard.

As a Track Two, non-official organization, through our 20 individual Member Committees and collectively as a whole, CSCAP provides an informal mechanism for scholars, intellectuals, and officials in their private capacities to discuss these types of issues and challenges in the region. Apart from our respective national governments, CSCAP has also traditionally engaged with the ARF on current and trending matters of regional security through consultations, meetings, and publications. Through our submission of Study Group memoranda and participation in ARF Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISMs) and Inter-Sessional Groups (ISGs), we have contributed analyses on a wide range of issues such as preventive diplomacy, energy security, non-proliferation and disarmament, and the regional security architecture.

The memoranda produced by various CSCAP study groups have been useful in providing policy recommendations. For example, the CSCAP Memorandum on Regional Security Architecture, I am informed, has provided some ideas for the officials working on the ASEAN post-2015 vision to study in respect of the future role of the EAS and other ASEAN related regional structures and mechanisms.

Currently there are five study groups looking at critical issues relevant to not just to CSCAP but, more importantly to governments throughout the region. Next year, through our newly established study groups on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue as well as Marine Environment Protection, we aim to add timely and pragmatic policy recommendations on these critical areas for governments to consider.

Another important contribution from CSCAP is by way of the publication of the CSCAP Regional Security Outlook. The 2016 edition has just been published. We are agreed that the CRSO needs to be widely publicized and disseminated to reach the people who matter most. CSCAP is grateful for the support given by others in this endeavor, in particular governments and other institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Exactly a month from now leaders of the ASEAN member countries and their counterparts from the Asia Pacific will gather in Kuala Lumpur for the 27th ASEAN Summit, related summits and the EAS. The ASEAN leaders are expected to declare the realization of the ASEAN Community and their vision for ASEAN post-2015. It is anticipated that they would look to the future of ASEAN and unveil a plan to bring the ASEAN Community forward within a ten year period up to 2025.

Within CSCAP we have been discussing the possible role of CSCAP beyond just supporting the ARF. The outcome of the Kuala Lumpur summits should provide the impetus for CSCAP to closely examine the various possibilities, including for CSCAP to be able to directly plug into the work on relevant issues of the EAS, ADMM Plus and other mechanisms, in addition to our existing linkage with the ARF. In this regard, the maintenance of close rapport and cooperation between CSCAP and the respective Track One mechanisms, in particular through the ASEAN Chair and Chair of ARF, is crucial. We have been able to work closely with the current chair, Malaysia, and look forward to a similar working relationship with the incoming chair, Laos.

I certainly feel that it would be helpful for CSCAP to study the ASEAN declaration and related documents as soon as the ASEAN Leaders adopt them next month. Our views and responses could be informally discussed among CSCAP members before we meet at the 45th Steering Committee Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 2016. Such a discussion could help us in determining CSCAP's future direction in line with the evolving regional architecture.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The CSCAP General Conference enables us to reach out to a wider audience of interested policy-makers and shapers, including emerging young leaders in the region. I congratulate CSCAP Mongolia and the Institute for Strategic Studies of Mongolia for organizing this year's biennial conference. I also thank all those within and outside CSCAP for bringing together this distinguished group of speakers and participants today. I look forward to keen and insightful exchanges during the course of this General Conference.

Thank you.