

**Fireside Chat with Y.Bhg. Tan Sri Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Executive Director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat.**

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

The Kuala Lumpur Business Club (KLBC) had the pleasure of meeting with Y.Bhg. Tan Sri Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Executive Director of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at Menara CIMB, Kuala Lumpur. The Fireside Chat was hosted by Dato' Rohana Tan Sri Mahmood, founding member of KLBC and the Chairman of APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), Malaysia.

Following Dato' Rohana's introduction, Tan Sri Rebecca opened the Fireside Chat by giving an overview of APEC and the important role it plays within the trade and business worlds, explaining that as a non-binding and voluntary organisation, APEC also serves as an influencer for other binding groupings such as ASEAN and the WTO. Tan Sri Rebecca also stressed on the importance of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and the role it plays to bridge the needs of businesses with the work of governments.

Tan Sri Rebecca spent approximately forty-five minutes addressing questions from the floor which covered the following areas:

- a) Importance of APEC for businesses;
- b) WTO's function in the trade world given the trade tensions;
- c) APEC's achievements in the 20 years since it was established;
- d) APEC's priority areas during Malaysia's Chairmanship in 2020; and
- e) Malaysia's role in post-Bogor goals.

Tan Sri Rebecca emphasised that APEC aims to build relationships and facilitate agreement. It is more consultative and by its very nature as a non-binding grouping, APEC members are more inclusive and open with each other.

Malaysia will create history as the first country to chair APEC twice, with the same democratically elected Prime Minister. At the same time Malaysia is mindful that it is taking over the Chair at a critical time of the completion of the Bogor Goals in 2020. (The Bogor Goals refers to APEC's self-imposed deadline of free and open trade and investment, no later than 2020.)

Malaysia will also emphasise the need for accurate, timely and effective communications. Towards this end, Malaysia has established a very strong communications team.

Tan Sri Rebecca's talk was followed by a lively question and answer session with members seeking to clarify their various positions.

The Fireside Chat was attended by approximately 30 participants, comprising KLBC members and invited guests.

**Prepared by,  
The Secretariat  
Kuala Lumpur Business Club**