

**Welcome Address by Mr. Tony Chew
On Dinner Dialogue with Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, 22nd June 2009**

His Excellency, Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand; His Excellency, Mr. Suthep Thaugsuban, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand; His Excellency, Mr. Kasit Piromya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand; Minister Lim Hwee Hwa, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour to welcome His Excellency, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to Singapore. We should thank him for taking time from his full schedule to grace this dinner as the guest-of-honour.

Mr. Hsieh Fu Hua and I serve as advisers to the SIIA. On behalf of the SIIA Chairman, Professor Simon Tay who is on sabbatical, it is our privilege and great honour to welcome the Prime Minister to address members of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs. The SIIA is a non-profit and independent think-tank that works with ASEAN governments and counterparts to offer analysis on regional issues. Yet we find increasingly, that businesses, the private sector and members of the public are interested in our work. Many members of the Singapore Business Federation for example, are here tonight. In this way, ASEAN is becoming an economic community and increasingly relevant to the people – a theme that Your Excellency has emphasized in Thailand's chairmanship of ASEAN.

Prime Minister, we look forward to hearing your insights and perspectives. We know this will be a memorable evening for all, and that the relationships between the peoples and the businesses of Thailand and Singapore will become ever deeper, close and meaningful.

Please join me in welcoming His Excellency, Prime Minister Abhisit.