

Press Release



ERIA and Fukuoka Prefecture in Japan Organize “ERIA Regional Network Forum in Fukuoka” on “Economic Integration in East Asia and Strategy for SME Development”

Fukuoka, February 1, 2012 – The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and Fukuoka Prefecture organized the ERIA Regional Network Forum on “Economic Integration in East Asia and Strategy for SME Development” in Fukuoka, Japan which was the first time for the Kyushu and Yamaguchi region. The ERIA Regional Institute Network (RIN) members, academia, researchers and representatives from private sectors in Fukuoka participated as speakers and panelists in the forum. More than 350 participants attended the forum.



The forum was opened with remarks from Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture, Mr. Hiroshi Ogawa, followed with a speech by the Secretary General of ASEAN, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, who emphasized that with the slowdown in North America and Western Europe, deepening of regional integration in East Asia is of strategic importance so that the latter remains the source of growth for the region and the world. During the sessions, number of issues related to the necessity of the economic integration and the prospect of SME development through the economic integration in East Asia and the expanding roles and chances for Japanese SME were discussed. Fukuoka’s unique location with rich experiences and well developed SME with leading technology in environment-friendly products will provide new business opportunities for ASEAN and East Asia, where SME linkages will serve as a key driver as well as solutions for obstacles of the regional integration effort. At the end of the forum, H.R.H Samdech Norodom Sirivudh, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) conveyed the concluding remarks. He mentioned that in order to complete the journey towards the realization of an East Asian community, the forum will inspire young East Asian citizens to make this collective efforts “mission possible”. The forum was closed with remarks by Mr. Hidetoshi Nishimura, Executive Director of ERIA in which he stressed that vibrant, competitive, and dynamic SMEs and their active participation in regional production networks would serve as three engines of sustainable development, narrowing development gap, and deepening regional integration. ERIA will work closely with Fukuoka prefecture through its research network and knowledge exchange, especially in its ongoing work on developing “ASEAN SME Policy Index”.

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ERIA is an international organization that supports the ASEAN Secretariat by making policy recommendations at regional governmental meetings such as the East Asian Summit (EAS), aimed at furthering East Asia's economic integration.

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