



Event Highlights



The First Extraordinary ERIA Governing Board Meeting

12 March 2016, Japan

The first Extraordinary ERIA Governing Board Meeting was held in Tokyo on 12 March 2016. Chaired by Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, the discussion examined ERIA's achievements during its first 9 years and the region's expectations regarding ERIA's role in promoting a stable and prosperous ASEAN and East Asia. ERIA was honoured by the presence of H.E. Mr Toshihiro Nikai, Chairman of the General Council of the Liberal Democratic Party, Japan; H.E. Mr Motoo Hayashi, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry; H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary General of ASEAN; and H.E. Dr Surin Pitsuwan, former Secretary General of ASEAN and now Special Advisor to ERIA; as well as Governing Board representatives.



Lao PDR at the Crossroads: Industrial Development Strategies 2016–2030

30 March 2016, Lao PDR

ERIA and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR organised a National Policy Dialogue to discuss future strategies for the country's industrialisation. The dialogue was based on the joint research conducted by ERIA, Economic Research Institute for Trade (ERIT), National Economic Research Institute (NERI), and Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd.

ERIA Chief Economist, Prof Fukunari Kimura, presented an overview of the Lao PDR at the Crossroads study. He explained the policy implications, based on the concepts of geography and connectivity, on the country's industrialisation and economic development. Contributors from Daiwa Institute of Research, ERIT, IDE-JETRO, NERI, and ERIA also presented research findings.

About 200 people from different ministries, representatives from the Lao regions, national and international private sector, and Lao-based international development organisations attended the dialogue.



First SEOM-EAS-ERIA Roundtable

1 July 2016, Lao PDR

Senior Economic Officials from East Asia Summit (EAS) countries expressed their hope that ERIA studies could help bridge the development gaps in ASEAN and EAS countries as the ASEAN Economic Community moves forward. Bridging these gaps is crucial as most of the countries are involved in mega free trade agreements (FTAs), such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

ERIA Economist Dr Lurong Chen presented on ‘21st Century Regionalism, Mega FTAs, and Asian Regional Integration’, saying that involvement in global value chains – rather than involvement in mega FTAs – should be the focus to sustain long-term productivity. He added that innovation and protection of intellectual property rights for the long term are key elements in creating innovation in the country’s fundamental productivity.



15th Asia-Europe Business Forum

13–14 July 2016, Mongolia

ERIA delegation participated in the 15th Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF 15) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, one of the side events of the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 11). Several stakeholders from the public and business sectors, including H.E. Mr Saikhanbileg Chimed, Prime Minister of Mongolia, attended this event.

Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura presented ERIA research projects on Asia-Europe Connectivity and North East Asia Power Grid Interconnection, which were done under the memorandum of understanding between ERIA and the Government of Mongolia. He emphasised (i) pursuing a holistic programme of connectivity which recognises the interlinkages between physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity; and (ii) recognising energy connectivity as a crucial aspect of physical and institutional connectivity, and intensifying efforts for hard and soft infrastructure for cross-border energy transmission and energy security.



11th Asia-Europe Meeting

15–16 July 2016, Mongolia

Delegates from ERIA attended the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 11) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. ERIA President Hidetoshi Nishimura reported on the outcomes of the 'Asia-Europe Connectivity Vision 2025: Challenges and Opportunities', a joint project between ERIA and the Government of Mongolia. He, together with Mr Orgil Luvsantseren, Ambassador and ASEM Senior Official at the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also launched said publication to international media.



Appointment of Tan Sri Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta. Maria as Senior Policy Fellow

13 September 2016, Indonesia

ERIA appointed Tan Sri Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta. Maria as Senior Policy Fellow of ERIA's new Policy Design Department. Her work will connect ERIA's research to the needs of policymakers in the region, enabling them to make

more informed governance decisions. Dr Rebecca has extensive knowledge of ERIA's work, having served on the Governing Board since 2015.

Dr Rebecca, during her inaugural seminar on 13 September 2016, presented 'RCEP: Challenging ASEAN Centrality'. Her presentation highlighted her wealth of experience during her 30 years of service in Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry. The seminar, themed 'ASEAN Economic Integration and the Role of ERIA', was graced by a distinguished audience comprising several ambassadors to ASEAN, ASEAN Secretariat officials, embassy officials, and researchers from other think tanks.



15th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Negotiations

17–21 October 2016, China

Attending this meeting were officials from Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and the 10 ASEAN countries as well as delegates from the ASEAN Secretariat and ERIA. Discussions focused on market access negotiations regarding trade in goods, services, and investment, rules of origin, intellectual property, and competition, among others.

ERIA Senior Policy Fellow and former Secretary General of Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Tan Sri Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta. Maria, in her two presentations, highlighted a few recommendations and some benefits of services liberalisation for RCEP member countries. Among these are reduced price as a result of improved productivity, real income gains, and increased foreign investments.



Seventh ASEAN Connectivity Symposium

20 October 2016, Lao PDR

ERIA hosted the Seventh ASEAN Connectivity Symposium on 'Intensifying Partnerships to Realise the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025'. The symposium brought together over 180 government officials, diverse stakeholders, and experts on connectivity.

H.E. Thongphane Savaphet, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR, in his keynote address, highlighted the importance of connectivity for the Lao PDR: the country needs to transform from a 'landlocked' to a 'land-linked' country.

In his opening remarks, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura raised the issue of ASEAN's increasing global prominence and posed the question on what kinds of deliverables can be offered to stakeholders beyond ASEAN. Attendees included ambassadors from ASEAN member countries and ambassadors to ASEAN from dialogue partners.



World Tsunami Awareness Day 2016 in Jakarta

15 December 2016, Indonesia

ERIA, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Indonesian Mitigation Agency (BNPB), and the Government of Japan hosted the symposium on 'World Tsunami Awareness Day (WTAD) 2016 – Indonesia'.

Speaking at the event, in alphabetical order, are luminaries such as Indonesia's Vice President H.E. Drs H. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla; H.E. Mr

Toshihiro Nikai, Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan; H.E. Kazuo Sunaga, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN; and Special Ambassador for the WTAD and Special Advisor to ERIA President, H.E. Prof Akiko Yamanaka, among others.

A highlight of the symposium was the presentation by students from Japan and Aceh on the Report on the High School Students Summit held in Kuroshio in November 2016. At this summit, the youth attendees discussed what the next generation could do to overcome – if not mitigate – the risks of disasters caused by natural hazards.



ERIA–AIPA Memorandum of Understanding

16 December 2016, Indonesia

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) between ERIA and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) spells out the cooperation between the two organisations in conducting research, capacity building programmes, as well as exchange of information regarding research outcomes and policy recommendations on economic issues.

Signatories to the MoU were Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, and H.E. Isra Sunthornvut, Secretary General of AIPA. Witnesses to the signing were Mr Teru Fukui, Member of Japan’s House of Representatives; H.E. Kazuo Sunaga, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN; Prof Akiko Yamanaka, Special Advisor to the President of ERIA; and Mr Nobuyasu Nikai, Executive Secretary to the Secretary General of Liberal Democratic Party of Japan. Secretary General Sunthornvut stated that AIPA is formulating projects and initiatives that will move AIPA and ASEAN forward. He hoped both organisations could gather stakeholders comprising parliamentarians,

civil society, academics, ERIA economists and policy fellows, and ASEAN peoples to discuss important social, political, and economic issues for ASEAN.



Third Asia Cosmopolitan Awards Ceremony

14 January 2017, Japan

ERIA and the Nara Prefecture of Japan held an awarding ceremony, the Nara Forum 2017, for the Third Asia Cosmopolitan Awards. This award aims to recognise on a biennial basis individual(s) or organisation(s) that have significantly contributed to the development of a peaceful and stable East Asian Community, the narrowing of development gaps in the region, and the establishment of sustainable social growth towards cultural and economic integration in East Asia.

The Grand Prize awardee is H.E. U Thein Sein, former President of the Myanmar, for his leadership during Myanmar's transitional period. The Economic and Social Science Prize is awarded to Professor Masahisa Fujita, for his work in the field of economic geography. For the cultural category, the awardee is H.E. Mr Herman Van Rompuy for his Haiku poetry, an Asian art that promotes harmony and mutual understanding. Mr Van Rompuy is the first full-time president of the European Council and an accomplished Haiku poet.