

## PRESS RELEASE

### *CLMV Forges ASEAN strategies*

*Luang Prabang, 13 December 2014*



Luang Prabang—Lao PDR: In preparation for the arrival of ASEAN Community and promotion of regional and global connectivity, senior officials from CLMV countries attended a three-day workshop to work out common strategies to cope with future challenges.

Two-dozen officials at the deputy director-general level from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam joined regional experts from Thailand and Japan tackling issues related to good governance, logistics, agricultural management and vocational training, which was held in Lao on 10-12 December. “ERIA Executive Leaders Initiative 2014” was jointly organized by Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia as well as Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

The workshop was opened in Vientiane on 10 December by H.E. Somchith Inthamith, Vice Minister, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao People’s Democratic Republic followed by a keynote speech “ASEAN issues and challenges” by Dr. Leebor Leebouapao, Director General, National Economic Research Institute, Ministry of Planning and Investment.

In his speech, Somchith said Laos and CMV countries need further capacity-building especially among skill workers to ensure the success of ASEAN integration ASEAN as a single market of 630 million people. He revealed that Laos has a scorecard of 85.1 per cent in implementing the blueprint of ASEAN Economic Community. The ASEAN-Lao two-way trade was amounted to US\$2.5 billion in 2012, with the Thai-Lao trade made up the bulk of ASEAN-Lao trade.

During the workshop, the participants were divided into three groups: a) trade of high value added agricultural products; b) promotion trade along East-West Economic Corridor; c) vocational training for human resource development. Each group was supervised by a resource person.

Invited resource persons are Dr. Sompop Manarungsan, President, Panyapiwat Institute of Management, Thailand; Dr. Narong Powlaktong, Independent Committee, Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Finance, Thailand; Prof. Seiichi Kawata, Dean, Advanced Institute of Industrial Technology, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan.

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The CLMV participants also made field trips to a cooperative handicraft center at Ban Phanom, an agriculture project in Xiengneun district and the construction site of Nam Khan No. 3 Electric Dam.

This initiative is part of numerous capacity-building programs and activities organized by ERIA for the new members of ASEAN.

Wrapping the three-day workshop, all the three groups presented a series of recommendations to improve their capacity to harness the ASEAN economic integration.

In his closing remark, Mr. Yasushi Iwata, ERIA General Manager, reiterated that common regional approaches and policies and enhanced engagements with private sectors are pivotal for the post 2015 economic integration in ASEAN.

Professor Yasuhiro Yamada, Special Assistant to the ERIA Executive Director on CLMV issues and Dr. Hank Lim, Chairman of ERIA Academic Advisory Council were on hand to provide further comments.

**What is ERIA:**

ERIA is an international organisation based in Jakarta. Since its founding in 2008, ERIA, through its research, supports the ASEAN economic integration process in ASEAN member countries. As the leading economic think tank in the Region and the Sherpa institution for the ASEAN Summit process (including the East Asia Summit), ERIA's research has influenced the policy-making process in the Region and has facilitated the goal of realising an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015.

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