



Three major developments marked the year 2014 for ERIA's general affairs.

The first is the historical signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between ERIA and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). ERIA Executive Director Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura signed the MoU with OECD Secretary-General, Mr. Angel Gurría, on 5 May 2014 in Paris, France.

A few months before the signing, Prof. Nishimura and H.E. Mr. Angel Gurría met in Paris, where Prof. Nishimura expressed appreciation for OECD's support on the SME Policy Index developed by both organisations. H.E. Mr. Gurría said that 'ERIA is a very important shining reality and collaboration with ERIA is critical for OECD.' He further added that 'it is very encouraging that we have prospects of further cooperation in the region to work together'. This signing thus marked the beginning of ERIA's role as the 'East Asia OECD', envisioned as early as August 2006 when H.E. Toshihiro Nikai, Former Minister of Economy, and Trade and Industry of Japan, proposed said think tank in Asia. Since the signing, ERIA and OECD has cooperated and

collaborated on wide range of issues such the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, good regulatory practices, trade in value added, disaster management, and others, which are crucial and relevant to East Asia.

After several years of negotiations since ERIA's establishment, ERIA finally signed on 13 October 2014 the so-called host country agreement with the Government of Indonesia, specifically called the 'Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia'. Through this agreement, the government grants ERIA special legal treatment accorded to an international organisation, including the privileges and immunities that will enable ERIA to perform its functions and conduct its operations efficiently and effectively.

Finally, to further strengthen and expand its outreach function that ERIA has developed in the last few years, ERIA in 2014 created a new post—Public Relations Director—to focus on web and social media.