

Sustainable Development



Addressing Poverty and Vulnerability in ASEAN: An Analysis of Measures and Implications Going Forward

By Sudarno Sumarto and Sarah Moselle

ERIA Discussion Paper 2015-63

This paper reviews and analyses the mechanisms through which ASEAN quantifies progress vis-à-vis poverty and socio-economic development. Drawing on analytic literature and international experience, this paper details specific reforms that the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community could consider adopting to holistically capture the specific vulnerabilities faced by the region and more accurately measure progress in implementing the ASEAN post-2015 vision. These recommendations most significantly include revising the formulation of the purchasing power parity poverty line, harmonising data collection efforts and introducing an ASEAN panel survey, and leveraging the comparatively rich availability of household data among member states to create an ASEAN-specific multidimensional poverty index.

Can Thinking Green and Sustainability Be an Economic Opportunity for ASEAN?

By Venkatachalam Anbumozhi and Ponciano S. Intal, Jr.

ERIA Discussion Paper 2015-66

ASEAN member states are confronted by serious environmental problems that threaten to undermine future growth and regional stability. This paper presents four major environmental challenges that ASEAN policymakers will need to address towards 2030: water management, deforestation and land degradation, air pollution, and climate change. These challenges exhibit the characteristics of wicked problems which, as developed in the planning literature, are dynamic and complex; encompass many issues and stakeholders; and evade straightforward, lasting solutions. Detailed case studies illustrate the complexity and significance of these environmental challenges and their nature as wicked problems. As environmental performance indicators show, there will be no easy or universal solutions to environmental problems across ASEAN. This is a caution against over-optimism for formulating sector-specific solutions, yet not a cause for despair. The paper suggests general principles which may be useful across the board to tackle the issues and accelerate green growth.

Increasing the Resilience of Asian Supply Chains to Natural Disasters: The Role of the Financial Sector

By Willem Thorbecke

ERIA Discussion Paper 2016-08

The financial sector is a part of the vital infrastructure of the economy. It can play an important role in mitigating the economic dislocation caused by natural disasters. Resilient financial institutions can ease anxiety and maintain confidence following a disaster. Robust insurance markets provide funds for reconstruction and are an efficient way to prepare for catastrophes. Deep and efficient bond markets allow governments to finance expenditures for emergency relief at lower costs. This paper considers steps that ASEAN member countries can take to develop the financial sector in these ways and thus be better prepared for the earthquakes, typhoons, tidal waves, and other catastrophes that buffet the region.

Demographic Change and Fiscal Sustainability in Asia

By Sang-Hyop Lee, Jungsuk Kim and Donghyun Park

ERIA Discussion Paper 2016-11

Changes in the population age structure can significantly affect fiscal sustainability since they can affect both government revenue and expenditure. For example, population ageing will increase expenditure on the elderly while reducing potential growth and, hence, revenue. This paper projects government revenue, expenditure, and fiscal balance in developing Asia up to 2050. Using a simple stylised model and the National Transfer Accounts data set, the authors simulate the effect of both demographic changes and economic growth. Rapidly ageing countries such as the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Taiwan will likely suffer a tangible deterioration of fiscal sustainability under their current tax and expenditure system. On the other hand, rapid economic growth can improve fiscal health in poorer countries with relatively young populations and still-growing working-age populations. Overall, our simulation results indicate that Asia's population ageing will adversely affect its fiscal sustainability, pointing to a need for Asian countries to further examine the impact of demographic shifts on their fiscal health.

Strengthening Natural Resources Management in ASEAN: National and Regional Imperatives, Targets, and Opportunities

By Kaliappa Kalirajan, Kazi Arif Uz Zaman, and Gaminiratne Wijesekere

ERIA Discussion Paper 2015-59

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint adopted in 2009 incorporated 'ensuring environmental sustainability' as one of its six broader characteristics. A mid-term review was carried out to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the implementation activities in ASEAN member states (AMSs) and ASEAN as a whole. This paper aims to analyse the performance of natural resources management (NRM) of each AMS based on the review. This paper proposes an analytical framework to measure the performance of NRM with appropriate adjustments, relevant modifications, directions for the future, and corresponding way forward, while exploring opportunities for member countries and other Asian countries. It also proposes developing some standardised concrete indicators or benchmarks that may be used to measure NRM activities within a common framework for all ASEAN countries.

Strengthening Regional Cooperation, Coordination, and Response to Health Concerns in the ASEAN Region: Status, Challenges, and Ways Forward

By Jacob Kumaresan and Suvi Huikuri

ERIA Discussion Paper 2015-60

The health and well-being of the population are a precondition for any successful country or region. ASEAN, as a well-established regional actor, has great potential to influence the health condition of its population through various measures and at different levels. This paper examines regional and sub-regional health concerns of the 10 ASEAN member states. It aims to give an overview of Southeast Asia's existing cooperation in health with regional and global actors; describe the current status of health—maternal and child mortality, communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, health systems, and health financing; and provide recommendations on strengthening regional cooperation, coordination, and responses to existing and emerging health challenges, and improving health systems to meet the region's future needs.

Tourism Supply Chains and Natural Disasters: The Vulnerability Challenge and Business Continuity Models for ASEAN Countries

By Meinhard Breiling

ERIA Discussion Paper 2016-06

The global development of tourism has been tremendous over the last decades, and is likely to continue. The value chain of tourism will be altered in ASEAN. Improving the tourism supply chains and the related supply chain networks will widely contribute to efficiency. On the other hand, natural disasters continue to challenge tourism, claiming 1.35 million lives worldwide in 1994 and 2013. Disaster management can be widely improved, and current international and regional efforts on strategies for disaster risk reduction can be accelerated. The Austrian experience provides insights on how tourism can develop and grow despite the presence of natural hazards.

Towards Reframing the Spirit of ASEAN Environmentalism: Insights from Japan's COHHO Experience and Studies

By Masaru Tanaka and Shigeatsu Hatakeyama

ERIA Discussion Paper 2016-05

Japan has managed to keep 67 percent of its forest area over the last half century. However, fishermen and the scientific community has been noticing a gradual breakdown in the fundamentally important ecological link between its forests and surrounding seas. In response, the Kyoto University established the Field Science Education and Research Center, which initiated the Forest-Sato-Sea studies on the interdependence of forest and sea ecosystems. Simultaneously, a grassroots movement of coastal fishermen—'The Sea is Longing for the Forest'—had started to develop. With heightened awareness of environmental problems resulting from the massive earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident of 2011, the movement and the people behind the studies have closely collaborated, convinced that fundamental solutions to environmental problems would require environmental education for the next generation, one rooted in real-life experiences. Such experiences can be gained by studying and working to restore the interdependence among forests, seas, rivers, and wetland habitats that connect them. To this end, an ASEAN Center for Forest/Sea Studies is hoped to be established, affirming ASEAN's commitment to collaboratively creating a sustainable future by balancing economic prosperity with environment conservation.