

Opening remarks at the Workshop on “SMEs Access to Finance in Selected East Asian Economies”, on January , 2011, at ERIA office, Jakarta

Distinguished scholars, my colleagues from the ASEAN Secretariat, ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to Jakarta and ERIA office!

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to have all of you here, making the time in your busy schedule. It is also an honor for me to make opening remarks for this Workshop of the SME Working Group.

I would like to express my appreciation for all of your great contribution and earnest efforts for the implementation of the Working Group’s research. The research results of this Working Group – in my understanding – are to provide empirical evident of financial constraints or gaps faced by SMEs predicted by theoretical framework. Moreover, the findings on the extent of gaps and characteristics of SMEs for selected East Asian countries will provide better understanding on policy remedies to overcome those gaps.

ERIA is proud to support the research conducted by this Working Group that can provide for both knowledge accumulation and policy orientation. Before closing, I would like to stress the following points:

First, I strongly urge you to not only explore the issues faced by SMEs within your country boundary but also with **a wider ASEAN context, in terms of shared best practices and other regional policies initiatives**, so that we can positively contribute to the fastening and deepening of our regional economic integration. I think this ERIA's analytical works would provide more inputs for the ongoing **"ASEAN Policy Blueprint for SME Development (APBSD)"**.

Second, you may be aware of ERIA's recently complete task on **"Comprehensive Asia Development Plan (CADP)"** that lays out concrete development strategies according to country's stages of development. So, I hope that findings from this SMEs research will provide further recommendations into the realization of your own country's development potentials as well as the region as a whole.

Last but not less, after completing this high quality research, I encourage you all to disseminate your findings to a wider audience especially policy makers, by publishing **a concrete country's policy brief on the local media outlets**. I also expect that your contribution to ERIA's research works continue to be **internationally referred to**.

I wish you all a productive and successful workshop! Thank you very much for your attention.