

PRESS RELEASE



Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen of the Kingdom of Cambodia urges ASEAN to Overcome Challenges to Economic Integration

Phnom Penh, October 30, 2012 – Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen of the Royal Government of Cambodia, in his keynote address at the symposium on “*Realizing a More Integrated, Competitive, Equitable, and Resilient ASEAN Community*” emphasizes that ASEAN strengthen resolve and close cooperation among members to overcome remaining challenges to realize ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. The Symposium, jointly organized by the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), and Harvard University, was held at Phnom Penh on 30-31 October 2012.



In his keynote speech, Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen proposed eleven priority measures to achieve the goal of building a more integrated, competitive, equitable and resilient ASEAN community. The priority measures include: dismantling of tariff and non-tariff barriers, enhanced trade facilitation, further services liberalization and domestic reform, speeding up implementation of the regional framework for investment liberalization and facilitation, enhanced connectivity and transport facilitation, promotion of SME development, conclusion of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations by 2015, financial market integration, efficient and sustainable provision of ICT and energy, accelerate implementation of MRAs on professional services, and review the institutional mechanisms under AEC.

Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen highlighted the importance of overcoming obstacles to the implementation of AEC measures such as the ASEAN Single Window and other trade facilitation measures. The review of the institutional arrangements under AEC are meant, among others, to strengthen the AEC monitoring system and the functioning of the dispute resolution mechanism. He urged ERIA to support AIMO (ASEAN Integration Monitoring Office)'s function of reviewing the progress of ASEAN economic integration.

PRESS RELEASE

Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, Executive Director, ERIA noted in his welcome speech that as the 2015 timeline draws near, more efforts are still needed to ensure that the common goal of building the ASEAN Community is realized. *“We are also aware that there are issues and challenges that needed to address now”*, he added. ERIA has also been supporting the AEC process through various studies and research requested by leaders of ASEAN member states including the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the AEC Blueprint.

The Symposium is the third of a series of symposia organized by ERIA to support Summit activities of ASEAN and East Asia. Around 30 distinguished speakers and moderators discuss a range of topics such as economic integration, narrowing the development gaps, food security, energy security and innovations. Around 300 participants from various ministries and governmental agencies, diplomats, universities and the private sector attended the first day of the Symposium. Around 200 are expected to attend the second day of the symposium.

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