

Message from the President



◀ Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura

Greetings!


Fiscal year (FY) 2015 was significant for ERIA as it saw the completion of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), thus marking a new starting point for further regional economic integration in ASEAN and East Asia. With AEC 2015, ERIA will deepen its research to support economic integration in the region in the next decade.

In the area of research, ERIA's contribution to the region in FY2015 focused on infrastructure development. In November 2015, ERIA published its flagship report on infrastructure, *'The Comprehensive Asia Development Plan 2.0 (CADP 2.0): Infrastructure for Connectivity and Innovation'*, which contains information on over 750 infrastructure projects in ASEAN and East Asia. This report will hopefully be useful for international donor agencies and funding institutions in taking coordinated or harmonised action to improve the development of infrastructure for regional connectivity and innovation. Leaders of East Asia recognise this report as an important document towards the revision of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, as expressed in the Chairman's Statement of the Ninth East Asia Summit.

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ERIA focused not only on the AEC but also on the equally important ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). To support the ASEAN Community achieve a people-oriented community that is 'inclusive, sustainable, resilient, and dynamic', ERIA came up with the report on 'Framing ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Post 2015', outlining the framework and key recommendations which hopefully will be incorporated in the ASCC Blueprint 2016–2025 and successfully implemented.

This is because almost all long-term and common economic problems, such as disaster management, food security, migration, and labour mobility, fall under the ASCC. ERIA submitted the final draft of this report at the 10th Coordinating Conference of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community and the book at the ERIA International Symposium



held in Malaysia in November 2015, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Malaysia and the ASEAN Secretariat.

FY2015 highlighted ERIA's recognition of the important role of energy development in supporting the region's economic growth. ERIA's energy research has been growing significantly every year, lately comprising roughly 40 percent of its studies. The ERIA Energy Unit has been focusing on power grid interconnection systems, the eco town model, social acceptance of power plants, and oil stockpiling technology, among others. ERIA also jointly published the *Southeast Asia Energy Outlook 2015* with Paris-based International Energy Agency. In the Energy Ministers Meeting in October 2015, the Ministers welcomed the Energy Research Institute Network and ERIA's high enthusiasm for and focus on energy research.

ERIA commemorated the first anniversary of the landmark signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2014. It held the ERIA–OECD MoU First Anniversary Symposium on 'Inspiring the ASEAN Community Towards 2025' in Jakarta, Indonesia. The joint policy research between

the two organisations is hoped to be useful in promoting economic growth and good practices on trade and investment policies in Southeast Asia, including building resiliency in ASEAN.

One of our important activities is holding frequent meetings with Ministers of member countries to input policy recommendations. Thus, in FY2015, ERIA co-organised the 'Mekong Five Economic Forum: Current Status and Prospect of Advancing Frontier Markets' in Tokyo, Japan. The forum was held at the sidelines of the Seventh Mekong–Japan Summit Meeting in July. All five Mekong leaders were invited to discuss the investment advantages and the growth strategy in their region.

As regards resiliency and disaster management, ERIA co-organised the 'Symposium on Building National Resilience: Recognising World Tsunami Day' and 'Enhancing Global Awareness on Disaster Management and Prevention', both held in November. These events aimed at sharing information on disaster management to strengthen national resilience against disasters and to raise awareness of the World Tsunami Day, which the United Nations adopted and recognised.

In March 2016, ERIA successfully held its first Extraordinary Governing Board Meeting in Tokyo, Japan. The meeting emphasised the need for ERIA to regularly review its policy focus, giving due consideration to (i) deepening East Asian integration, (ii) realising an inclusive ASEAN Community, and (iii) addressing issues extending beyond the region, such as innovation. ERIA will continue to conduct activities under the cooperation of member countries.

We have also paid successful courtesy calls to the Deputy Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Japan, explained the plan of reformation starting in March 2016 and the proposed support for the Lao chairmanship this year, and showed deeper appreciation for their continuous support to ERIA.

ERIA's efforts in 2015 did not go unnoticed, with regional leaders commending ERIA's continuous support through the Chairman's Statements of various ASEAN and East Asian summits. In the 10th East Asia Summit, the Leaders encouraged ERIA to continue its support to the Chair of the ASEAN and East Asia Summits. ERIA was also recognised as one of the strategic and essential organisations that would help accomplish the goal of the AEC Blueprint 2025, thus deepening economic

integration and fostering the building of the ASEAN Community.

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These, I would proudly say, are a confirmation that ERIA's research has been highly valued not only by East Asia but also globally.

Despite these achievements in 2015, we in ERIA continue to be prepared, yet humbled, by the daunting task we face. We will remain committed and work harder towards deeper ASEAN economic integration and economic development in East Asia.



Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura
President