



| Event
| Highlights

AV 2040



ERIA and Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly launch ASEAN Vision 2040

AV2040 (29 April 2019),
Bangkok, Thailand

ERIA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand jointly launched the report titled 'ASEAN Vision 2040: Towards a Bolder and Stronger ASEAN', which examines future challenges facing ASEAN in the next 2 decades.

The study was commissioned by Thailand to examine the challenges ASEAN will face in the next 2 decades. ERIA invited 60 regional experts and specialists to work on this important report. Thailand, as current holder of the chair of ASEAN, has adopted the theme, 'Advancing Partnership for Sustainability.'

According to the report, by 2040, ASEAN will be amongst the top four economies in the world together with the United States, China, and India. However, at the same time, ASEAN will face intense competition in terms of technological capability, skilled manpower, and scientific and engineering talent especially compared to China and India.

The report highlighted seven recommendations: First, ensuring ASEAN Centrality; Second, digital ASEAN, promoting an adaptive and innovative ASEAN that is able to successfully adjust to the digital transformation and Fourth Industrial Revolution; Third, sustainable ASEAN; Fourth, seamless ASEAN; Fifth, inclusive ASEAN focused on people empowerment and inclusion; Sixth, ASEAN identity; Seventh, a strong, coordinated, and effective ASEAN institutional ecosystem.

In August 2019, ERIA suffered a great loss with the passing of its Senior Economist and Senior Policy Fellow, **Dr Ponciano Sabado Intal Jr.** ERIA recognised his leadership at the Launch of ASEAN Vision 2040, with as its themes Integration, Transformation, and ASEAN Centrality.



AV 2040



The launch of ASEAN Vision 2040

AV2040 (30 August 2019),
ERIA Office, Jakarta, Indonesia

ASEAN Vision 2040, ERIA's project with the Government of Thailand, the ASEAN Chair in 2019, was launched in Jakarta on 30 August 2019 with the theme of 'Integration, Transformation and ASEAN Centrality'.

The four-volume publication consists of thoughtfully written chapters by 60 ASEAN experts. Each chapter is a fascinating exploration of crucial issues confronting the region now and in the near future.

Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, said, 'The original ASEAN Vision 2020 was launched during the Asia Financial Crisis in 1997 to express the Leaders' determination to move boldly forward to deepen economic integration and strengthen community building. Now we are approaching the year 2020, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and ERIA have jointly worked to develop the Vision for the next two decades to address the great uncertainty in the regional and global geo-political, geo-economic and technological landscapes in the coming 20 years.'

The panel discussion was opened by Prof Fukunari Kimura, ERIA's Chief Economist and professor at Keio University, followed by Prof Mari Pangestu, Professor, University of Indonesia and ERIA Governing Board Member.

Prof Peter Drysdale, Emeritus Professor, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University and Member of ERIA's Academic Advisory Council, Dr Kasan Muhri, Head of Trade Analysis and Development Agency, Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, and Dr Venkatachalam Anbumozhi, Senior Energy Economist at ERIA, were also panellists on the occasion.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies Southeast Asia Program hosted a roundtable discussion on ERIA's publication ASEAN Vision 2040 with Simon Tay (Chairman of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs); Kavi Chongkittavorn (Senior Fellow at Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University); and Lydia Ruddy (Director of Communications at ERIA). All three speakers were authors of ASEAN Vision 2040.

The discussion focused on ASEAN Centrality and the Indo-Pacific, themes which were covered in Volume One of AV2040. Simon Tay made the point that ASEAN Centrality faces challenges on two fronts: a geo-economic challenge from the Belt and Road Initiative as well as a geopolitical one with the concept of the Indo-Pacific. Regarding the geopolitical front, the new ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific is a good initial effort to define an ASEAN version of the concept that allows ASEAN Member States to take a stance on an issue, but not to take sides.



CSIS-ERIA Roundtable Discussion on ASEAN Vision 2040

AV2040 (24 September 2019),
Washington, DC, United States



CSIS-ERIA Roundtable Discussion on Trade, RCEP, and Innovation

AV2040 (18 November 2019),
Washington, DC, United States

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Southeast Asia Program in Washington, DC recently hosted a second roundtable discussion with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) on 18 November 2019.

ERIA's Chief Operating Officer, Mr Koji Hachiyama, gave an opening remark which also introduced the ASEAN Vision 2040 project. Launched in August 2019, ASEAN Vision 2040 is a four-volume publication written by 60 ASEAN experts covering present and future issues facing the region.

As Asia forges ahead with its development and economic prominence, ASEAN in particular, has a unique role in moving the wheels of regional development and initiating a leadership role during a time of unprecedented changes. To highlight ASEAN's important role, the CSIS-ERIA roundtable discussion included two speakers from ERIA covering the themes of Innovation and ASEAN Centrality. These selected themes represent key priorities required to achieve a strong and unified ASEAN.

Unlike growing protectionist sentiment in global trade, ASEAN has solidified its stance by supporting open trade norms and multilateralism. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a prime example of an ASEAN-led initiative that combines aspects of openness to trade and investment as well as the possibility of creating reforms beyond regional borders.

Through events such as the CSIS-ERIA roundtable discussions, it is hoped that US leaders and policymakers gain greater awareness of ASEAN's future and growing significance amidst ground-breaking shifts and massive disruptions.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) attended the G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting on 11–12 May 2019 in Niigata, Japan. ERIA also participated in the senior officials meeting on 10 May and contributed in the finalisation of the Agriculture Ministers Declaration, which will be presented to the Chair of G20.

The First Breakout Session of the G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting was held on May 11 and chaired by H.E. Mr Takamori Yoshikawa, the Minister of Agriculture of Japan. ERIA participated in this session, which was held under the theme of Agriculture and Human Resource Development.

'ASEAN is under growing pressure to raise its agricultural productivity as well as rising demand for better quality, more varied and affordable foods. As per capita incomes in the region increase, ASEAN should improve its agriculture and food value chains,' said ERIA President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura in his remarks during the breakout session.

He emphasised that improved human resources, a deep understanding of agriculture–food value chains and the forces for innovation in the sector, capacitated and reframed institutions, as well as strong basics can turn ASEAN's agriculture sector into a driver of robust inclusive growth. Prof Nishimura had a bilateral meeting with Minister Yoshikawa on the sidelines of the G20 Meeting to discuss further cooperation between ERIA and Japan in terms of the development of Food Value Chains in ASEAN region.

G20



ERIA Attends G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

G20 (11–12 May 2019),
Niigata, Japan

G20



Prof Akiko Yamanaka Speaks at T20 Summit 2019 in Tokyo

27 May 2019,
Tokyo, Japan

Prof Akiko Yamanaka, Special Advisor to the President of ERIA, participated as one of the co-chairs of Task-Force 4 (TF4): Economic Effects of Infrastructure Investment and its Financing, one of the ten Task Forces at Think20 (T20), the research and policy advice network for the G20 Summit 2019 that was held on 26–27 May 2019 in Tokyo, Japan.

During the panel session of TF4, Prof Yamanaka proposed ways to develop high-quality infrastructure investments that takes various challenges into account – financial, climate, and urban planning challenges. Prof Yamanaka spoke about three issues regarding people and infrastructure that can contribute to disaster mitigation – enabling laws, raising awareness, and developing infrastructure. She also discussed the issues in her policy brief.

TF4 was led by Dr Amar Bhattacharya from the Brookings Institution and Prof Naoyuki Yoshino from the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI).

A delegation from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), headed by its President, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, was invited to attend the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Digital Economy on 8 and 9 June in Tsukuba, Japan. Prof Nishimura also had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Rudiantara, Minister of Communication and Information Technology of Indonesia, on the margins of the Ministerial Meeting.

In the Digital Economy Session, the ministers exchanged their opinions on the concept of 'Data Free Flow with Trust', human-centric artificial intelligence, digital security and sustainable development goals, and inclusion.

Prof Nishimura expressed ERIA's view that the Free Flow of Data with Trust is an excellent initiative and very important for small and medium-sized countries such as many ASEAN Member States. He emphasised the need to establish effective international arrangements that ensure interoperability of different data governance frameworks.



G20

ERIA Attends the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Digital Economy

G20 (June 8-9 2019),
Tsukuba, Japan

In the bilateral meeting with H.E. Rudiantara, Prof Nishimura asked for advice on what ERIA will be expected to do as a follow-up for the Project 2045, especially on 'Digital Technologies to Improve Quality of Life'. H.E. Rudiantara asked ERIA to determine Indonesia's human capital needs every 5 years, highlighting the importance of education and human resource development.

G20



ERIA Takes Part in G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth

G20 (June 15–16),
Nagano, Japan

A delegation from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), headed by the President, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, participated in the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth on 15 and 16 June 2019 in Nagano, Japan.

Prof Nishimura delivered a presentation during the Joint session, in which he talked about 'Energy and Climate Challenges in the ASEAN Region – Role of Fossil Fuel, Hydrogen, and Electric Vehicles'.

During the Environment Session 1 with the theme 'Resource Efficiency and Marine Plastic Litter', Prof Nishimura underlined the importance of (i) Promoting knowledge-sharing and good practices, both regionally and globally; (ii) Developing policy coordination mechanisms at the national and international levels; and (iii) Encouraging the development of scientific knowledge and international cooperation.

During the session, H.E. Yoshiaki Harada, the Minister of the Environment of Japan discussed working with ERIA to establish a Regional Knowledge Centre of marine plastic litter at ERIA as one of the deliverables of the G20 Presidency.

On the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting, Prof Nishimura held discussions with several ministers – H.E. Siti Nurbaya, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia; H.E. Ignasius Jonan, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of Indonesia; H.E. Danny Ray Brouillette, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Energy of the United States; and H.E. Le Cong Thanh, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), together with the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan, the Office of Healthcare Policy, Cabinet Secretariat of Japan, as well as the Japan Centre for International Exchange (JCIE) held the AHWIN Forum: Achieving Healthy Aging in Asia, which was the side event of the G20 Health Ministers Meeting in 2019.

Asia Health and Well-being Initiative (AHWIN) was launched by the Government of Japan in 2016. The half-day event was one of the activities of AHWIN to bring policymakers, researchers, representatives of the private sector, and civil society leaders from around Asia together for an extensive dialogue on health and elderly care.

At the opening session, Mr Akio Okawara, President and CEO of JCIE, Dr Yasuhiro Suzuki, Chief Medical Global Health Officer of MHLW of Japan delivered their opening remarks.

After the Keynote Speech, a Special Lecture on Challenges Faced in Dementia and Community-based Approaches in Prevention was delivered by Professor Takayuki Suzuki, Director of the Institute of Gerontology and Professor of J.F. Oberlin University.

In the final session, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA delivered his closing remarks in which he underlined the importance of the circulation of the long-term care workforce, as well as the development of the business environment to realise active and healthy ageing societies in the region.



ERIA Co-hosts the AHWIN Forum: Achieving Healthy Ageing in Asia

G20 (17 October 2019), Okayama, Japan



**Macroeconomic
Policies and
Development
Challenges Lead
Discussion at Asia
Regional Roundtable**

18–19 June 2019,

ERIA Office, Jakarta, Indonesia

The Seventh OECD–AMRO–ADB/ADBI–ERIA Asian Regional Roundtable on Macroeconomic and Structural Policies, a T20 Japan Associated Event, took place on 18–19 June 2019 at ERIA's offices.

Through five sessions, this year's roundtable addressed recent domestic, regional, and global trends that are changing the environment including subthemes of trade tensions and digital economy, connectivity in ASEAN+3 region, urbanisation, ageing populations, and human capital development.

The first session examined challenges facing global trade and multilateralism such as rising protectionism, unequal opportunities to engage in global value chains, and legal systems that are inadequate for digital economy and international trade in services.

The second session focused on improving the quality of education and human capital development in emerging Asia.

The third session addressed urbanisation in Asia and its role in driving economic growth. Cities host dynamic firms and create productive jobs, with agglomerations resulting in better matches between workers and jobs, strong input–output linkages, and greater knowledge spillover.

The fourth session looked at building capacity and connectivity in ASEAN+3 economies and how they have come a long way since the Asian Financial Crisis.

The final session focused on fiscal sustainability in the era of ageing populations, which presents a major challenge in terms of falling revenues and increasing expenditure.

The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo–Pacific is a dynamic and living document that aims to protect ASEAN interests and promote cooperation in the maritime domain. It was adopted by ASEAN Member States in a relatively short time thanks to Indonesia’s strong leadership and Thailand’s support, as discussed by the three panelists during the Jakarta Media Briefing on 4 July 2019.

The Briefing was co-hosted by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the Jakarta Post to discuss The Role of ASEAN in the Indo–Pacific Era. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms Lydia Ruddy, ERIA’s Director of Communications.

The panellists included Dr Siswo Pramono, Director General of Policy Analysis and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia; Mr Endy Bayuni, the Senior Editor of The Jakarta Post; and Mr Kavi Chongkittavorn, Senior Communications Advisor of ERIA.

Dr Siswo focused his explanation on the creation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo–Pacific, saying, ‘We are sea people, because sea is the way we communicate and transport our things to the rest of the world. That is why the maritime domain is very important, and one of the cooperation will be on maritime aspect.’

Meanwhile, Mr Bayuni and Mr Chongkittavorn each spoke about the speed with which the Outlook was endorsed by ASEAN leaders since its inception, and how the Indo–Pacific concept finally came into existence after several disagreements.



Journalists and Diplomatic Community Discuss ASEAN Outlook on the Indo–Pacific

4 July 2019,
ERIA Office, Jakarta, Indonesia



ERIA Attends the 40th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter- Parliamentary Assembly

26 August 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand

The 40th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) with as its theme 'Advancing Parliamentary Partnership for Sustainable Community' was held from 25–30 August 2019 at the Shangri-La Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, the President of ERIA, was invited to the opening ceremony and the first plenary session on 26 August.

Prof Nishimura also attended the Committee Meeting on Organizational Matters on 27 August as ERIA submitted a draft resolution on 'Establishing AIPA–ERIA Joint Dialogue to Support the Waste Management for Sustainable Development'. The resolution was adopted by all AIPA member countries at the second plenary session on 29 August.

Based on the resolution, ERIA and the AIPA Secretariat will organise a Joint Dialogue to support proper waste management for sustainable development in ASEAN countries.

Prof Nishimura also paid a courtesy call to H.E. Chuan Leekpai, AIPA President of National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand and President of AIPA.

Energy ministers and researchers from ASEAN countries attended the Second East Asia Energy Forum (EAEF) under the theme of 'Towards Sustainable Energy Transition and the Role of Connectivity in ASEAN'. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Energy Thailand in cooperation with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and ERIA's Energy Research Institutes Network (ERIN).

H.E. Kulit Sombatsiri, the Permanent Secretary of the Minister of Energy of Thailand, welcomed all participants whilst giving an overview of ASEAN countries' energy sector challenges in general and those of Thailand in particular.

Afterwards, three keynote speeches were delivered by the Minister of Energy, Manpower & Industry of Brunei Darussalam, H.E. Dato Seri Setia Dr Awang Haji Mat Suny bin Haji Md Hussein; the Minister of Energy and Mines of Lao PDR H.E. Dr Khammany Inthirath, and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Mines and Energy of Cambodia H.E. Dr Ty Norin. The three country representatives highlighted the diversification of energy sources and the cross-border energy and power connectivity.

Mr Atsushi Taketani, the president of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Bangkok and Chief Representative for ASEAN, closed the keynote session by summarising the role of Japan in the G20 meetings where the term 'innovation' is gaining importance.

Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, the President of ERIA, closed the forum by summarising its most important findings. He reiterated the need for the leaders of ASEAN and the East Asia region, policymakers, and experts to remain realistic, especially on matters of climate change and fossil fuel use.



Policymakers and Experts Discuss Sustainable Energy and Connectivity at the Second East Asia Energy Forum

2 September 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand



ERIA Releases Updated Database to Help Improve Trade Environment in ASEAN

10 September 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand

The official handover ceremony of the Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) Database from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to ASEAN Member States (AMS) took place in the morning on the sidelines of the 51st ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings, and was attended by H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN; Ministers from the East Asia Summit; and ERIA officials.

Over the past 15 years, tariffs have declined worldwide, but the number of NTMs has increased dramatically – by 15% in ASEAN over the past 3 years. Because NTMs constitute a grey area where trade policy objectives meet public policy goals, effective NTM management must consider not only their trade-distorting effects but also their potential benefits.

For ASEAN, the removal of non-tariff barriers is amongst the major components of regional efforts to enhance intra-regional trade. In principle, the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement has explicitly stated obligations regarding NTMs. In practice, however, the integration agenda has focused primarily on tariffs, which have been reduced to 0.2% on average within ASEAN.

During the ceremony, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, handed over the database to Dato Lim Jock Hoi, which was witnessed by the EAS Ministers.

Prof Nishimura stated, 'As room to liberalise tariffs further is limited, addressing NTMs is fundamental to fully realise the ASEAN Economic Community.'

ASEAN Vision 2040 and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific were amongst the topics of discussion at a meeting of editors and senior journalists from across ASEAN and East Asian countries held by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). The Eighth ERIA Editors' Roundtable was held on 6 October 2019 in Bangkok, in cooperation with the Bangkok Post.

Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, welcomed the participants and talked about the process behind the creation of ASEAN Vision 2040, ERIA's flagship publication of 2019.

'The ASEAN leaders commended our four-volume ASEAN Vision 2040 at the Chairman's Statement of the 34th ASEAN Summit in June this year,' said Prof Nishimura.

Several contributors to the report, including Prof Simon Tay, the Chairman of Singapore Institute of International Affairs, and Dr Shiro Armstrong, Director of the Australia-Japan Research Centre in the Australian National University, participated in the Roundtable as speakers and discussed the future trends of ASEAN.

H.E. Mr Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Foreign Minister of Thailand, and Dr Suriya Chindawongse, Director General of ASEAN Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand went on to deliver their remarks. Prof Sakon Varanyuwatana, Chairperson of the Trade Competition Commission of Thailand and ERIA's Governing Board Member, and ASEAN Secretary General, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, also presented at the event.



Editors Discuss ASEAN Vision 2040 during the Eighth ERIA Editors' Roundtable

6 October 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand



ERIA Participates in the 15th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Cambodia

7–11 October 2019,
Siam Reap, Cambodia

The 15th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and Related Meetings were held in Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia from 7 to 11 October 2019. A delegation from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), headed by its President, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, participated in two meetings: the ASEAN–Japan Ministerial Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation and the 16th ASEAN Plus Three Environment Ministers Meeting (16th APT EMM).

Prof Nishimura delivered a presentation about the establishment of the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (RKC–MPD) by ERIA to respond to ideas from several global and regional initiatives on marine plastic issues, including the G20 Energy and Environment Ministers’ Meeting on Marine Litter, the ASEAN+3 Marine Plastic Debris Cooperative Action Initiative, and the ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris. The RKC–MPD itself consists of four major activities – developing RKC–MPD Foundation, sharing knowledge, raising awareness and building capacity, as well as collecting and analysing information. ERIA is currently developing a website on marine plastic debris that will serve as a knowledge sharing platform.

Prof Nishimura was confident that ERIA will be able to play a key role in the knowledge sharing activities because it has conducted comprehensive research focusing on waste management, circular economy, and marine debris in recent years.

Industry 4.0 and technological development needs to be human-centric; therefore, workers of all ages – not just the young – need to be equipped with relevant skills for the digital transformation of our economies and societies, said ERIA President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura in the first panel discussion session, ‘Advancing ASEAN 4.0 in the Global Value Chain’, of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) 2019.

He suggested that, with advanced communications technology, traditional sectors can be upgraded through a ‘micro-macro information loop’, where small businesses can access relevant market information from their hand-held mobile device. He shared his optimism that servicification of manufacturing, where manufacturing activities increasingly rely on services, will create new economic opportunities in the region by allowing ASEAN businesses to remotely perform specialised tasks for firms located in developed countries. Prof Nishimura also presented a new video based on ASEAN Vision 2040 Volume III: Transforming and Deepening the ASEAN Community. The ASEAN Vision 2040 is ERIA’s flagship publication of 2019. It was developed upon the request of the Government of Thailand as part of their deliverables for the Chairmanship of ASEAN.

During the second day of ABIS 2019, Dr Rashesh Shrestha, Economist of ERIA, spoke during the panel ‘ASEAN Human Empowerment and Development (AHEAD)’. He emphasised the need for better skills in micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in ASEAN. A broad skill set is needed: technical STEM skills need to be combined with soft skills and also a combination of cognitive and non-cognitive skills is required. In addition to urgently investing in good quality education, governments in ASEAN need to embark on broad labour market reforms to increase formalisation, flexibility, and skill mobility to create the incentives for investment in skill development by students and workers.

Around 1,000 high-level government officials from ASEAN countries, private sectors, ASEAN’s dialogue partners, civil society organisations, and academic and research institutions attended ABIS 2019. Keynote addresses were given by world leaders including the Prime Ministers of Thailand, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Russia, as well as HRM The Duke of York.



ERIA Participates in the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit 2019

2 November 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand



**ERIA's Research
Projects
Acknowledged in
Statements from the
35th ASEAN Summit
and Related Meetings**

4 November 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand

Various research projects and initiatives conducted by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) were recognised by the leaders of ASEAN Member States and East Asian countries during the 35th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 2 to 4 November 2019.

In his speech at the 22nd ASEAN Plus Three Summit, the Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Shinzo Abe, mentioned one of ERIA's latest undertakings – the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris. 'I'd like to call for the sharing of Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which aims at reducing the pollution due to marine plastic litter by 2050, and your participation into this framework towards the realisation of this vision. Based upon the marine initiative, Japan will support the capacity building in ASEAN countries regarding waste management as well as infrastructure development. Under the APT Marine Plastic Debris Cooperation Initiative we announced last year, we will strengthen cooperation such as establishing a new knowledge centre at ERIA,' said Prime Minister Abe.

ERIA was mentioned in several statements of the ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings, as listed in Annex F of this Annual Report.

ERIA participated in the Asia–Pacific Think Tank Summit (APTTTS), co-organised by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

The panellists included the President of ERIA, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura; the President of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), Dr Celia M. Reyes; and Dr Kirida Bhaophichitr, Research Director for International Research and Advisory Service at the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI). Prof Nishimura emphasised the importance for think tanks to balance adequate planning and swift action to support governments in today's fast-changing world.

During the Plenary Session Panel I on 'Trade Wars or Trade Winds: Which Way is the Wind Blowing?', ERIA's Chief Economist, Fukunari Kimura, stated that 'in the long run there will be very negative effects of the trade war because of the risk of the collapse of the rules-based trading system. To prevent this from happening we must reform the WTO and the rules-based order and encourage mega free trade agreements (FTAs) like Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).'

APTTTS participants also took part in numerous breakout sessions and plenary panels on topics affecting Asia–Pacific such as Trade Wars, Climate Change, Diversity and Innovation, as well as Integration and Alliances in the Asia–Pacific. Prof Akiko Yamanaka, Special Advisor to the President of ERIA, President of the International Tsunami Disaster Prevention Society, and Senior Diplomatic Fellow at the Cambridge Central Asia Forum of Cambridge University, served as a panellist in the 'The Coming Food and Water Crisis' breakout session. On the final day of APTTS, Prof Kimura gave a Keynote Speech on 'Digital Technology for Development' in which he prescribed that ASEAN and developing East Asia must reformulate their development strategies to address the issues of globalisation and digital technology. His assessment also included a future shift to consumer/people-oriented policies as part of the economic integration process. The 3-day APTTS event demonstrated the regional think tank community and policymakers' commitment to be at the forefront of today's important issues and finding an achievable solution for a resilient Asia–Pacific.



Role of Asian Think Tanks Key to Addressing Global Challenges

12 November 2019,
Bangkok, Thailand



ERIA Participates in the First Roundtable of the OECD Digital for SMEs Global Initiative

29 November 2019,
Paris, France

ERIA, represented by its Chief Operating Officer Mr Koji Hachiyama accompanied by Director for Strategy and Partnerships Dr Giulia Ajmone Marsan, participated in the First Roundtable for the OECD Digital for SMEs Global Initiative, held at the OECD Headquarters in Paris.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of ASEAN's diverse and dynamic economy, accounting for 95%–99% of all business establishments and more than half of total employment in all ASEAN Member States. The digitalisation of the SME sector is therefore of great importance for individual ASEAN Member States as well as the economic integration of the entire region, as recent ERIA analysis suggests.

Mr Hachiyama intervened in the Second Session on Artificial Intelligence for SMEs. He explained how ASEAN offers great opportunities for AI development across firms, including SMEs. According to ERIA research, 56% of the SMEs are at the basic level with minimal digital adoption, mostly to facilitate communication and operations. Around 34% use digital tools more meaningfully to aid sales and marketing. Only 10% of the SMEs are in the advanced category, with sophisticated digitalisation applied in various aspects of their business. Even amongst the minority of SMEs that are digitalised, most do not utilise digital tools to their fullest. This means that most ASEAN SMEs still need to catch up with more advanced digital technology like AI or blockchain.

Mr Hachiyama presented the following key initiatives necessary for the adoption of AI technology by ASEAN SMEs:

1. The importance of collecting a large amount of high-quality and homogeneous data. These are at present not yet fully available in the region but as digital technology adoption is moving fast they can be available in the near future. Initiatives supporting open government data can also be an important factor in this respect;
2. The potential for creating an ASEAN Digital Single Market, which will be an important foundation for AI businesses. Important aspects of a potential Digital Single Market include free flow of data with trust, inter-operability, common standards, cyber-security, and privacy protection;
3. The importance of developing skills for the digital economy in general and AI technologies in particular. This requires not only knowledge of computer sciences and IT but also a thorough understanding of the core features of AI. Human-centred AI technologies are also important, as highlighted in the OECD principles on AI.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), the Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc. (DRDF) and the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) launched the report *Ageing and Health in the Philippines: Findings of the 2018 Longitudinal Study on Ageing and Health in the Philippines (LSAHP)* at the Park Inn by Radisson in Quezon City.

The forum was attended by over 90 participants from government, international organisations, research institutes, and professionals. Congressman Carlos Isagani Zarate of the Bayan Muna Party-List and National Scientist Mercedes B. Concepcion also attended the event.

The LSAHP is related to the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN) and is the first longitudinal study targeting older persons or individuals aged 60 years or over in the Philippines.

Undersecretary Juan Antonio Perez III of the Commission on Population and Development said that the Philippines must shun age discrimination and look at older Filipinos as 'a resource rather than a burden,' since the country faces rapid urbanisation.

In his message, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, said the 2018 LSAHP is an important study as the key to coping with ageing is improvement in health expectancy. He mentioned that the 2018 LSAHP was cited at the recent G20 Health Ministers Meeting in October 2019.



ERIA's Study on Older Filipinos Draws Positive Feedback from the Government of the Philippines

9 December 2019,
Quezon City, The Philippines



ERIA Renews MoU with ASEAN Inter- Parliamentary Assembly

22 January 2020,
Jakarta, Indonesia

Representatives from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) met in the morning for the signing ceremony of the renewed 'Memorandum of Understanding to Develop AIPA's Capacity on Matters Concerning ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration in Various Areas'. AIPA was represented by Hon Nguyen Tuong Van, Secretary General of AIPA, while ERIA was represented by its President, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura. The ceremony was witnessed by H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN and H.E. Mr Akira Chiba, Ambassador of Japan to ASEAN.

In her ceremonial statement, the Secretary General of AIPA, Hon. Nguyen Tuong Van expressed her commitment to building and achieving the common goals of the ASEAN community vision, by working 'very closely with the ASEAN secretariat to support legislative and executive bodies of ASEAN member states'.

The signing of this year's MoU renews the signing of the first MoU on 16 December 2016. ERIA President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura paid homage to the former Secretary-General of AIPA, Hon Isra, stating that since the signing of the first MoU, ERIA and AIPA have strengthened their relationship through various opportunities under Hon Isra's strong leadership. One such activity under this MoU was a joint dialogue titled 'Parliamentarians Supporting the "Quiet Revolution" for Better Regulatory Governance', which contributed to a better understanding by AIPA parliamentary members of non-tariff measures (NTMs) and barriers as well as good regulatory practice and reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS) organised the 'Why Think Tanks Matter Forum: Southeast Asia Trade Policies in the World Economy'. This forum is part of the annual Why Think Tanks Matter Forum and the 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Report Launch organised by TTCSP of the University of Pennsylvania, which showcases the critical work done by think tanks in countries around the world.

The aim of the forum was to highlight the importance of think tank research and policy analysis for the policymaking process. Policymakers in Indonesia and ASEAN more broadly, increasingly request evidence-based policy recommendations. The analysis and recommendations produced by think tanks enable decision makers to produce policies that are able to respond to the needs of communities.

The forum highlighted the challenges faced by ASEAN member countries in harmonising regulations to improve trade performance in the Southeast Asian region. While trade between ASEAN countries is increasingly open with reduced tariffs, actual intra-ASEAN trade remains relatively low. There are multiple reasons for this, such as Non-Tariff Measure (NTMs), logistics, customs procedures, and other trade facilitation issues.

The forum also marked ERIA's achievement in the Top 100 Think Tanks in South and Southeast Asia and The Pacific in the 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index, where it was ranked 11th.



Why Think Tanks Matter Forum: Southeast Asia Trade Policies in the World Economy

31 January 2020,
Jakarta, Indonesia



ERIA Presents Research at 8th OECD–AMRO–ADB/ ADB–ERIA Asian Regional Roundtable

14 February 2020,
Tokyo, Japan

The Eighth OECD–AMRO–ADB/ADBI–ERIA Asian Regional Roundtable on Macroeconomic and Structural Policies was held in Tokyo, Japan, on 13–14 February 2020 and attended by experts from four institutions and several resource people from the Ministry of Finance, central banks, as well as the embassies of each country in Tokyo.

In the opening session, Prof Naoyuki Yoshino, President of the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), Ms Yumiko Murakami, Head of the Tokyo Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Mr Toshinori Doi, Director of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) and Mr Koji Hachiyama, Chief Operating Officer of ERIA provided opening remarks.

On the second day, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, delivered special remarks to present the regulatory management systems as well as good regulatory practice in ASEAN. ‘The world that ASEAN and East Asia have to deal with over the next 2 decades will be vastly different. Asia will be the centre of the global economy, and therefore, it is imperative for ASEAN and the rest of Asia to secure an open trading system and plural global order which has been at the heart of Asia’s and ASEAN’s success,’ he said.

In the afternoon session, ERIA researchers introduced ERIA’s research on Non-Tariff Measures in ASEAN and East Asia and the development of the ASEAN Seamless Trade Facilitation Indicators (ASTFI). This research will contribute to the agenda of ‘Responsive ASEAN’ which was adopted as a title of this year’s ASEAN chairmanship by Viet Nam.

In response to the challenges faced by the World Trade Organization (WTO), Canada has encouraged ASEAN member countries to get more involved in WTO reform. Canada has taken a leadership role on WTO reform, including through the Ottawa Group, a group of 13 like-minded WTO members. The group's work focuses on three of the WTO's main challenges: dispute settlement, negotiations, and transparency.

ERIA invited Kendal Hembroff, Director General for Trade Policy and Negotiations at Global Affairs Canada, who indicated that the WTO's relevance has been at risk recently due to rising unilateral actions taken by individual countries and stagnating negotiations. Most critically, the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, which has also been proven effective in safeguarding international trade, is threatened with the ongoing impasse on new appointments of WTO Appellate Body members.

In attracting ASEAN countries, most of which are developing nations, she said the WTO needs to look at what constitutes a developing country to make sure that they have equal positions in WTO mechanisms. She also stated 'The right way to tackle this issue is to actually look at what kind of flexibilities are needed case by case in specific negotiations'.

Dr Intan Murnira Ramli, Policy Fellow at ERIA, pointed out that many intra-ASEAN agreements have embodied WTO principles as their baseline, thus confirming ASEAN's effort in keeping the WTO relevant.

Moderating the session, Anita Prakash, Director for Policy Relations at ERIA, advocated that the WTO's approach to address trade and development in existing agreements and future negotiations should be influenced by ASEAN and East Asia's commitment to rules-based trade agreements such as RCEP – the majority of whose members are developing or emerging economies and three are least developed countries (LDCs).



ERIA Trade Talk: WTO Reform – A Briefing by Kendal Hembroff

6 March 2020,
Jakarta, Indonesia