

The graphic features a large, light blue triangle on the left side, composed of smaller, overlapping triangles. To the right, a large, dark blue triangle is formed by three smaller triangles, each containing a different photograph of an event. The top photograph shows a stage with a person in a bright, glowing costume. The middle photograph shows a large crowd of people seated in an arena. The bottom photograph shows a close-up of a person wearing a tan baseball cap, viewed from behind, sitting in a white chair. The text "Event Highlights" is centered in the white space between the large blue triangles.

# **Event Highlights**

## ERIA Participates in the Second OECD Digital 4 SME Roundtable

04 February 2021



ERIA participated in the second D4SME (Digital for SMEs) Roundtable, the flagship event of the OECD Digital 4 SME Initiative, led by the OECD Center for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities to discuss challenges and opportunities for SMEs to go digital.

Mr Koji Hachiyama intervened in Session I on ‘SMEs Moving Online: The Digital Presence, e-Commerce, and Digital Security Risks’. He discussed ongoing ERIA research on the assessment of cybersecurity risks in ASEAN countries using indicators such as open services, e-mail infrastructure, and routing infrastructure. The research shows that a majority of ASEAN SMEs are not equipped to face cybersecurity risks and these risks are increasing given the fast growth of the digital economy and e-commerce across ASEAN. Countermeasures to limit these risks are key to safeguarding the online expansion of SMEs. Public-private partnerships to develop guidance and support in the area of cybersecurity with a focus on MSMEs need to be strengthened across ASEAN. The session was chaired by a New Zealand minister who expressed interest in cybersecurity developments across ASEAN and in Japan.

## ERIA Ranks in the Top Ten of International Economic Policy Think Tanks

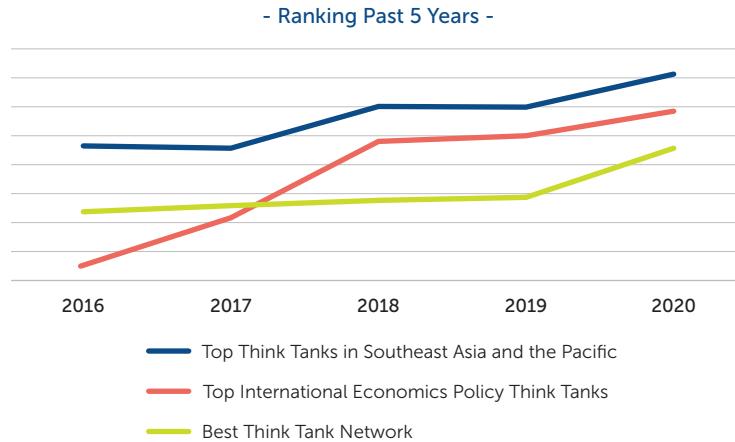
29 January 2021



The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) was ranked ninth out of 85 top International Economic Policy Think Tanks in the Global Go To Think Tank Index Report (GGTTI) conducted by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania.

According to the GGTTI, the ‘Top International Economic Policy Think Tanks’ category is dedicated to the leading international economic policy institutions within the global community. ERIA also ranked fifth in the category of Top Think Tanks in Southeast Asia and the Pacific along with many members of ERIA’s Research Institute Network (RIN) including the Brunei Darussalam Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies,

the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (Malaysia), the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (Indonesia), the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, the Singapore Institute for International Affairs, and the Thailand Development Research Institute.



In the coming years, the think tank community will have an increasingly vital role in an era of political and digital disruptions as well as economic and social instability. As the emerging market status of ASEAN Member States must adapt to the fast-changing global conditions, the work of ASEAN think tanks are integral to minimising potential risks and optimising the opportunities. By rising up through the ranks, ERIA has proven its commitment to quality research and policy recommendations.

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## IGES and ERIA Sign MoU to Strengthen Policy Research for Circular Economy and Prevention of Marine Plastic Pollution in ASEAN+3 Countries

07 January 2021



The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and ERIA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote data-driven policymaking and knowledge dissemination over the next 5 years. Though the MoU covers comprehensive collaboration between the two institutions, the initial focus is on the promotion of a circular economy, such as the prevention of marine plastic pollution. The first collaborative project, 'Data-Driven Policy Research Programme on Marine Plastic Debris', will be implemented jointly through ERIA's Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (RKC-MPD).

IGES has longstanding expertise in the areas of circular economy and resource efficiency, and experience in many international efforts including policy advisory activities for Southeast Asian countries on marine debris, along with its technical contributions to the G20 process. ERIA has contributed to conducting research and policy analyses to facilitate the building of the ASEAN Economic Community, promoting wide economic integration and sustainable development in East Asia, and narrowing development gaps in the region.

IGES President Kazuhiko Takeuchi stated, 'IGES is eager to collaborate with ERIA to jointly address the pressing regional problem of marine plastic litter in the region. Through this collaboration, my hope is for IGES to contribute, more broadly, to the promotion of a more circular economy and sustainable policymaking.'

'We have identified IGES as our valuable partner given the rich expertise they have in policy recommendations towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns in Asia. I hope that this MoU will be the beginning of a fruitful institutional collaboration towards the development of ASEAN and the East Asia region' said Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA.

## ERIA President Attends 7th IEF-IGU Ministerial Gas Forum

03 December 2020



The ASEAN energy mix will continue to have a large percentage of fossil fuel, but the share of natural gas is projected to be higher than coal in the next decades. ERIA's President Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura offered some policy recommendations in his remarks for the 7th International Energy Forum – International Gas Union Ministerial Gas Forum.

'Competitiveness of various fuels in power generation differs across the regions. In the ASEAN region, coal is the most competitive fuel due to its abundant domestic supply. In order to further promote the role of natural gas in the region, cost competitiveness of natural gas needs to be further enhanced by such actions as accelerating removal of destination restriction, developing a reliable LNG price benchmark, and regional gas pipeline interconnection,' said Prof Nishimura.

The 7th IEF-IGU Ministerial Gas Forum was held virtually and hosted by the Government of Malaysia. Prof Nishimura was part of the Panel Session 1 on Asia-Europe, the Middle East, and Africa – Opportunities in Growing Gas Markets: Producer-Consumer Perspectives on New Realities. Energy Ministers from Russia, India, Qatar, Nigeria, Brunei Darussalam, and Azerbaijan were also part of the panel, alongside industry leaders and heads of international organisations.

## AmCham Indonesia and ERIA Launch Survey Results on the Impact of COVID-19 on Foreign Firms in ASEAN

30 November 2020



AmCham and ERIA conducted a rapid survey in April 2020 to understand the evolving needs of US companies in Indonesia. Five months later, the two institutions joined forces again to implement a similar survey providing a more in-depth investigation of how foreign companies in ASEAN have been responding to COVID-19 and what plans they have moving forward. Twenty-four chambers and business organisations representing foreign companies were involved in the implementation of this survey. As many as 264 firms with operations in

ASEAN responded to 26 questions about the impact of COVID-19 on their business operations.

The event was opened by Mr Lin Neumann, the Managing Director of AmCham Indonesia. After welcoming the panellists and participants, he thanked ERIA for the strong collaboration. He also thanked the 24 businesses organisations and chambers representing many nationalities who helped to distribute the survey to their members. In his Opening Remarks, Mr Koji Hachiyama, the COO of ERIA, thanked everyone who helped implement the survey and said 'This survey will serve as the voice of businesses across ASEAN regarding the impact of the pandemic on their operations and how they plan to manage operations and investment now and into the near future.' After showing a short video that summarised the results, Ms Lydia Ruddy, Director of Communications for ERIA who lead the survey, presented some of the results in more detail. This was followed by a panel discussion with Mr Sunit Dhoka, Country Representative, Cargill Indonesia; Ms Siobhan Das, CEO, American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce; and Mr Dionisius Narjoko, Senior Economist, ERIA.

## ERIA Attends the Virtual 14th EAS Energy Ministerial Meeting

20 November 2020



The 14th East Asia Summit (EAS) Energy Ministers Meeting (EMM), hosted virtually by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Viet Nam, raised issues of clean and sustainable energy transition with affordable prices within the ASEAN region as well as regional and international cooperation to support the agenda.

The summit highlighted that energy demand in the region is forecast to increase by more than 50% from 2014 to 2040, especially in the transport and industry sectors. The increase in energy demand will affect carbon emissions every year. Mobilising low-carbon financing in the energy sector is thus becoming crucial. In this regard, strengthening partnerships and research innovation for sustainable energy transformation amongst member countries is necessary.

Deputy Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat, Dr Aladdin D. Rillo, presented key outcomes of the 15th EAS and other relevant developments. During the summit, the leaders agreed to accelerate regional partnership on common interests through the EAS Plan of Actions, particularly the need to accelerate regional economic growth and recovery within several areas, such as energy, environment, economic cooperation, trade, and connectivity.

In the last session, international organisations including ASEC, IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency), ACE (ASEAN Center for Energy), ERIA, and IEA (International Energy Agency), delivered their experiences and opportunities for sustainable energy development of each ASEAN members. They showed their commitment to support ASEAN countries to accelerate low-carbon and renewable energy development to diversify energy supplies, which will help to fulfil climate change mitigation and achieve carbon emission targets. See Annex F for ERIA being mentioned in the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 14th EAS EMM.

## ERIA Holds the 3rd East Asia Energy Forum Virtually

17 November 2020



The 3rd East Asia Energy Forum (EAEF) was organised as a virtual event by ERIA, the Energy Research Institute Network (ERIN), and the ministry of Industry, Viet Nam. The Forum was titled 'Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS), and Carbon Recycling in ASEAN'.

EAEF3 was a great success with insightful presentations by the Institute of Energy Economics Japan (IEEJ), the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), the Global Carbon Capture Storage Institute (GCCSI), the Mitsubishi Research Institute (MRI), the Japan Petroleum Exploration Co., Ltd. (JAPEX), the Environmental Consulting Department, Japan Nus Co., Ltd., the National University of Singapore (NUS), Pertamina, Indonesia, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mitsubishi UFJ Bank, and the Clean Energy Ministerial CCUS, and with active participation by the audience.

## ERIA's President Encourages ABIS to Foster Digital Connectivity to Overcome Challenges Brought About by COVID-19

13 November 2020



The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the movement of goods and services within the supply chains of the ASEAN Member States (AMS). ERIA's President, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, stated in his remarks delivered at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) 2020 that to address these challenges, AMS need to foster greater digital connectivity in the region. Recovering ASEAN's supply chains is critical for the recovery of the region because of its strong international production linkages under the framework of a single market and production base. Digital connectivity is key to this recovery. 'Investment in digital infrastructure and addressing the digital divide in ASEAN will be necessary to ensure equitable distribution of dividend from digitalisation. Capturing this opportunity requires actions beyond building internet infrastructure. with adequate investment in upgrading the education system, and upskilling and reskilling of the workforce,' said Prof Nishimura during the Panel Discussion on ASEAN's Economic Outlook.

In the Q&A session, Prof Nishimura reiterated the importance of productivity growth of MSMEs, which form the backbone of ASEAN economies, through the adoption of new technologies to improve productivity and stay competitive. Furthermore, he stated that even though information and communication technology (ICT) is important, its concentration can also displace people.

## President of ERIA Takes Part in the 22nd GECF Ministerial Meeting

12 November 2020



Based on ERIA's book *Energy Outlook and Energy Saving Potential 2019* ASEAN's natural gas demand is projected to grow by 3.5 times in the next 3 decades, making it a viable alternative for reaching a low-carbon future. However, natural gas needs to be more cost-competitive to play a bigger role in the region's energy mix, said Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, in his remarks at the 22nd Gas Exporting Countries Forum Ministerial Meeting chaired by H.E. Mr Abdelmadjid Attar, Minister of Energy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

'Natural gas is clearly promising for a low-carbon future. Its operational flexibility is a good combination with a growing share of variable renewable. Hydrogen could also be produced,' stated Prof Nishimura. He also underscored the importance of Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) for the ASEAN region, since the region will still depend on fossil fuel in the coming decades. 'Increasing numbers of countries, including Japan and China, are announcing carbon neutrality goals. For achieving carbon neutrality, all the solutions including efficiency, electronic vehicles, hydrogen, renewables, and CCUS/carbon recycling need to be mobilised,' he said, adding that 'If natural gas is to be a 'destination fuel', more than a bridging fuel, a combination of hydrogen and CCUS/carbon recycling is indispensable.'

## ERIA Hosts the 9th ERIA Editors' Roundtable online

05 November 2020



For the first time, ERIA hosted its annual Editors Roundtable (ERT) online and it was, therefore, open to many more attendees than usual. Moreover, the ERT did not follow Chatham House Rules, allowing journalists to report on comments and information presented during the event.

The first session opened with Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, offering welcome remarks. He said, next week ASEAN would be launching the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and

Implementation Plan. 'This recovery plan is very important and each of you should follow it closely. I must stress that ASEAN and the Dialogue Partners are working closely and diligently together to mitigate the virus and pave the way for a better future in the post-COVID-19 world', he said.

Mr Vu Ho, Director General of ASEAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, delivered the Keynote Speech, outlining key deliverables of Viet Nam's Chairmanship. ASEAN activities included the Leaders Statement on COVID-19 in February. For the first time ever, ASEAN hosted three summits due to the extra summit held to address issues related to the pandemic. The leaders have agreed to five initiatives to address COVID-19: (1) a COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund proposed by Viet Nam and Thailand which has already secured \$10 million; (2) a Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies; (3) Regional Standard Operating Procedures to cope with future pandemics; (4) an ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework and Implementation Plan which will be announced at the ASEAN Summit later in November; (5) and an ASEAN Center for Public Health with funding from Japan. He also mentioned efforts to create ASEAN travel corridors.

## **DISG Kick-off Webinar: Acceleration of Digital Innovation in ASEAN and Japan's Contribution**

28 October 2020



ERIA participated in the 'Kick-off Webinar: Acceleration of Digital Innovation in ASEAN and Japan's Contribution'. The event was the first in a series of webinars on 'Dialogue for Innovative and Sustainable Growth (DISG)', a new dialogue framework between ASEAN and Japan. More than 400 participants from the Asia-Pacific region joined the webinar.

In the opening remarks, Mr. Hirose Naoshi, Director-General of Trade Policy Bureau of Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, emphasised the importance of strengthening the close relationship between ASEAN and Japan by keeping businesses running and maintaining the flows of trade and investment to mitigate the negative

impact of COVID-19. He also mentioned that DISG could bring knowledge cooperation amongst the experts from various sectors to create solutions for the current crisis which can evolve into greater social and economic achievement.

During the panel discussion session, moderated by Mr. Kobayashi Hirokazu, Executive Director of JETRO Singapore, the four speakers discussed and provided insights on Japanese companies' selling points and ideal ways of economic cooperation. They pointed out the following: (1) Japan has its strength in technology especially in the combination of manufacturing and digitalisation; (2) Japanese companies should mentor and engage with MSMEs and include them in their value chains; (3) Japanese companies can link up with ASEAN digital start-ups through investing or giving them access to the larger market; and (4) we must remember that digitalisation could have a negative impact on people who are not ready for digitalisation.

## **ERIA Presents to ASEAN Plus Three Agriculture and Forestry Ministers**

21 October 2020



The 42nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and associated meetings were held virtually on 21 October due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), presented ERIA's research on food value chains at the 20th AMAF Plus Three Meeting.

Prof Nishimura outlined and explained the progress of ongoing projects: 1) Realisation of higher value-added of agricultural products in ASEAN countries through the development of effective cold chains, and 2) Enhancing food supply chain resilience and food security in ASEAN through digital technologies. These projects are conducted in collaboration with researchers in ASEAN countries and with the support of the Government of Japan.

Prof Nishimura also outlined the structure of ERIA's research on the utilisation of digital technologies, which has three components: 1)

COVID-19 impact analysis on food value chains in ASEAN by macrodata scenario analysis, 2) assessment of digital technology adaptation and related policy in ASEAN and other countries, and 3) in close collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, formulation of regional guidelines for the application of digital technologies in ASEAN food value chains.

Prof Nishimura concluded by saying that ERIA will continue these research activities to produce pragmatic policy recommendations for the improvement of food value chains in ASEAN countries in spite of uncertainties due to the pandemic and asked the ministers to support the projects. ERIA was honoured that the Joint Press Statement of the 20th AMAF Plus Three Meeting appreciated the progress of ERIA's projects as set out in Annex F.

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## ERIA Participates in the Asia Pacific Think Tank Summit 2020

09 October 2020



The annual Asia Pacific Think Tank Summit was organised and hosted virtually by the Think Tanks and Civil Society Program at the University of Pennsylvania with the theme 'A World Disrupted and Transformed.' Ms Lydia Ruddy, ERIA's Director of Communications served on the Planning Committee for the event.

Mr Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr, Chair of ERIA's Governing Board, chaired the opening session. During his remarks, Mr Cristobal highlighted ERIA's ongoing research on COVID-19 and the recent event organised by ERIA that provided perspectives on the impact of the pandemic from four countries in ASEAN: Philippines, Viet Nam, Singapore, and Indonesia.

The summit focused on the strategic and operational challenges facing think tanks in Asia and the Pacific as a result of the pandemic. Think tanks must face the reality that there will be no new normal, only a series of extraordinary events that create a world where disruptions and the abnormal will be the norm. The issues discussed at the Summit will be summarised and presented at the Global Think Tank Summit on 13 November 2020 which will also be held virtually.

## President of ERIA participated in the 29th Clean Coal Day in Japan 2020 International Symposium

02 October 2020



Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura delivered a keynote speech titled 'The Role of CCT in the ASEAN Region' at the 29th Clean Coal Day in Japan 2020 International Symposium 'Role of Coal/CCT in the Era of the Energy Transition'. Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the energy sector, Prof Nishimura stated that the massive reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as well as SOX and NOX emissions are likely to be temporary, rebounding in accordance with economic recovery and energy demand. He emphasised the importance of high-efficiency, low-emission thermal technologies combined with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies as a pragmatic solution of mitigating CO<sub>2</sub> emission in the EAS region.

Prof Jun Arima, Senior Policy Fellow on Energy and Environmental Affairs, also participated in the symposium on Day 2, Session 2 on 'Investment for Coal in the Era of Energy Transition' as the moderator. On Day 3, he reported the outcome of Session 2 and participated in the panel discussion on 'The Role of Coal/CCT in the Era of Energy Transition', highlighting the need to deliver clear a message on the Asian energy reality in international climate fora including COP26.

## AESCON 2020 Reveals How Improved Connectivity is the Way Forward for Asia–Europe Relations

25 September 2020



ERIA co-hosted this year's Asia-Europe Sustainable Connectivity Scientific Conference (AESCON) in partnership with the Joint Research Centre, European Commission, the Asia–Europe Foundation, and the Centre for China and Globalization (CCG). The event brought together researchers and policy analysts specialising in the fields of international connectivity, globalisation, and sustainable development with a particular focus on the regions of Asia and Europe. AESCON aimed to serve as an academic forum to discuss the global challenges affecting

today's world such as transport infrastructure, energy transition, climate change, digital economy, trade and investment flows, security, and social mobility.

The Chief Operating Officer of ERIA, Mr Koji Hachiyama, delivered opening remarks, emphasising the importance for Asia and Europe to be ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow and the fourth industrial revolution.

During the conference, ERIA's Energy Economist Dr Alloysius Joko Purwanto and ERIA's Research Associate Ms Ellen Putri Edita delivered their respective presentations based on the abstracts selected by the organisers.

Dr Purwanto collaborated with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre for their research on 'Air Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe' offering recommendations on the future of flights between the two regions post-pandemic. Ms Edita spoke on the topic of Aerotropolis based on her analysis of the social and environmental impact of the New Yogyakarta International Airport (NYIA) project in Indonesia. Based on the field research conducted by Ms Edita, it was revealed that the equal benefits that connectivity strives to bring had not been applied to Indonesia's NYIA project.

ERIA's Director of Policy Relations, Ms Anita Prakash, coordinated ERIA's partnership with the co-hosts of AESCON from Europe and Asia. She also presented her paper and spoke in the session on political connectivity. The main message of her presentation on 'Asia Europe Connectivity: Converging the Regulatory Standards and Sustainable Financing' was that connectivity plans must create trust amongst countries given that multilateral cooperation is needed for standards and regulations in connectivity plans.

## ERIA and AustCham Co-hosted Webinar on 'The Impact of Covid-19 on Australian Businesses Across ASEAN'

21 September 2020



ERIA and AustCham ASEAN co-hosted the webinar *The Impact of Covid-19 on Australian Businesses Across ASEAN* to present and discuss the result of the latest AustCham ASEAN business survey. The event was jointly organised by AustCham ASEAN and ERIA, through its Strategy and Partnership programme, funded by Australia. The webinar attracted more than 100 participants.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Koji Hachiyama highlighted the importance of building resilient supply chains across ASEAN and East Asia. He also mentioned how the AustCham survey complements and brings additional points of view to two surveys ERIA is currently conducting: one with the American Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia to survey foreign firms across ASEAN and the other survey focussed on Japanese firms in ASEAN.

The survey found that COVID-19 will have a negative impact on business in the next 6 months, but that sentiment has improved since April. At the same time, almost half of the respondents do not anticipate that the economic slow-down caused by the pandemic would be bad for their business. Interestingly, 71% of respondents agreed that business opportunities have emerged from COVID-19.

Dr Intan Ramli gave a presentation on the importance of good regulatory practices in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic in ASEAN. She highlighted the need to promote sharing of information and best practices in handling the pandemic, business consultation support, and public-private sector collaboration efforts; the importance of enhancing partnerships/collaborations between the government and the private sector; and of building on existing trade facilitating platforms in ASEAN. She also mentioned how the use and adoption of science, technology and innovation, and digital economy provide an opportunity and need to be encouraged, for instance by continuing the implementation of the ASEAN Work Program on Electronic-Commerce.

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## AIPA 41 General Assembly Strengthens Ties with ERIA

10 September 2020



Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura attended the 41st General Assembly of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) which was held online. A delegation from ERIA accompanied Prof Nishimura and attended the opening ceremony, the second plenary session and closing ceremony of the conference.

ERIA and AIPA work together to deal with the challenges of regional economic matters. On January of this year, ERIA and AIPA renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 'Develop AIPA's Capacity on Matters Concerning ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration in Various Areas.'

On June 2020, both parties held an online 'Joint Dialogue on Waste Management in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic' based on the Resolution on Establishing AIPA-ERIA Joint Dialogue to Support the Waste Management for Sustainable Development adopted at the 40th general assembly of AIPA.

AIPA 41 adopted a new resolution on 'Expanding Cooperation between AIPA and ERIA,' which includes the extension of their MOU to develop AIPA's capacity on matters concerning ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration.

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## ERIA Presents to ASEAN Foreign Ministers

09 September 2020



Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura made a presentation to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at the ASEAN Coordinating Council's Special Session on Sub-Regional Development. Prof Nishimura presented ERIA's work on sub-regional development and the importance of maintaining ASEAN Centrality.

Opened by Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat the session included a presentation by Mr Masatsugu Asakawa, President, Asian Development Bank.

The Chairman's Press Statement of the Special Session commended ERIA's research that facilitates ASEAN's regional integration:

*The Ministers were briefed by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the President of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) on their perspectives regarding ASEAN's role in narrowing the development gap and enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness as a region, promoting sustainable and equitable development in the region, and presenting the prospective role of sub-regional cooperation frameworks in regional integration efforts. The Ministers appreciated ADB's long partnership with ASEAN in promoting sub-regional and regional development as well as its timely support for the COVID-19 pandemic response. The Ministers commended efforts by ERIA as a regional think-tank in conducting quality research work to facilitate ASEAN's regional integration process.*

## ERIA Supports the 11th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium

31 August 2020



ERIA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, and the ASEAN Secretariat jointly organised the virtual 11th ASEAN Connectivity Symposium with the theme 'Enhancing ASEAN Cohesiveness, Responsiveness through Resilient Connectivity and Human Capital Development'. The virtual symposium which attracted over 150 participants from the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN Dialogue Partners, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, and Development Partners, as well as international organisations, the private sector, and other key stakeholders.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the symposium delved into three topics crucial for the region's recovery efforts: strategic investments in sustainable infrastructure and smart solutions; leveraging digital technologies to strengthen supply chain connectivity; and designing education and training for a future-ready workforce. Panelists from various backgrounds, experiences, and expertise joined the discussion.

The Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to ASEAN and Chair of the ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee Tran Duc Binh underlined that since the adoption of the first Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) in 2010 and the successor MPAC 2025, ASEAN Connectivity has an increasingly important role to support the region in rebuilding and recovering together.

In his opening remarks, Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, highlighted the importance of enhancing the digital economy and digital connectivity in the ASEAN and East Asia region, to build resilience against various risks to infrastructure and connectivity, including the spread of the coronavirus. He said that 'Digital connectivity enhancement and trade-and-investment liberalisation, improving the institutional connectivity are crucial policies to improve the attractiveness of the ASEAN region as an investment destination.' Professor Nishimura also mentioned the importance of Data Free Flow with Trust and human resource development for digital skills as a prerequisite of the digital connectivity development. ERIA's new research project, Comprehensive Asia Development Plan (CADP) 3.0, also features the significance of ICT development for further ASEAN economic integration and ASEAN Connectivity.

Participants exchanged views on the way forward to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and develop recovery strategies towards a seamlessly integrated ASEAN. The ASEAN Connectivity Symposium is a flagship annual event that brings together key stakeholders to identify areas of collaboration to enhance the implementation of MPAC 2025.



## ERIA Participates in the 52nd ASEAN Economic Ministers' and Related Meetings

29 August 2020



The 52nd ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Meeting, the 8th East Asia Summit (EAS) Economic Ministers' Meeting and other related meetings were conducted virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic from 24–29 August 2020. Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, the President of ERIA, presented ERIA's framework for COVID-19 recovery to the East Asia Summit ministers.

The Joint Media Statement of the 52nd ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting thanked ERIA for its continued support and contribution to regional integration and AEC-building efforts.

Prof Nishimura presented ERIA's research on 'Economic Growth, Market Stability, and Resilience of the EAS Region Post COVID-19.' In his opening remarks, he thanked the ASEAN Member States for the 20% increase in contributions over the next 5 years – a strong indication of ASEAN's trust in ERIA, for which ERIA is deeply honoured. He outlined ERIA's proposed model for EAS economic recovery post-COVID-19, which is based on three key policy areas: macroeconomic, trade and investment, and new technology.

## Future Development of Mekong Sub-region Key to ASEAN's Long-Term Growth

05 August 2020



The continued progress of the Mekong Sub-region (MSR) and the implications for the ASEAN Community was the main agenda of the ASEAN Forum on Sub-Regional Development held on 14 July 2020. Specifically, the online event covered 'Converging Mekong Sub-regional Cooperation with ASEAN Goals'. MSR has developed to become a model sub-regional initiative helping to boost economic growth and rapid poverty alleviation in the countries situated in the area. The event aimed to increase understanding of the benefits of sub-regional initiatives for addressing development gaps, enhancing connectivity, and promoting international coordination. Through synergies, improved

coordination and integration, as well as in-depth discussions, ASEAN is looking to advance development in the MSR.

The Minister of Trade and Industry of Viet Nam, His Excellency Tran Tuan Anh, delivered the opening remark of the event. In his speech, H.E. Tran Tuan Anh highlighted ASEAN's successful economic integration over the past 25 years during which time the regional body 'has become one of the most vibrant and dynamic economies in the world.' The minister highlighted the successful development of the MSR and how it has facilitated ASEAN's connectivity regionally and with other countries.

ERIA's Prof Fukunari Kimura followed with his presentation on 'Sub-Regional Development Strategy in ASEAN after COVID-19: Inclusiveness and Sustainability in the MSR.' Prof Kimura acknowledged the advantages of the MSR initiative in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction, but he also pointed out how the existing huge development gaps require a strategic approach if the whole region wants to reach upper-middle-income status.

In the context of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Prof Kimura stated that MSR countries have so far successfully mitigated the virus transmission through health policies that consider each respective country's medical care capacity. He also predicted the acceleration of information and communications technologies in addition to a possible reshuffling of international production networks. A serious economic downturn resulting from a massive demand shock is expected to occur as well.



## ERIA and AIPA Host Dialogue on the Issue of Waste Management During COVID-19

13 July 2020



ERIA held the 'Online Joint Dialogue on Waste Management in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic' with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), the second activity with AIPA under the MoU between ERIA and AIPA signed in December 2016 and renewed in January 2020 (ERIA renews MoU with ASEAN inter-parliamentary assembly). While the Joint Dialogue was originally based on the *Resolution on Establishing AIPA-ERIA Joint Dialogue to Support the Waste Management for Sustainable Development* adopted at the 40th General Assembly of the AIPA in August 2020 in Bangkok (Resolution on The 40th AIPA General Assembly) the Dialogue actually consisted of two sessions on municipal solid waste management and medical waste management based on the contents of the Policy Brief on 'Strengthening Waste Management Policies to Mitigate the COVID-19 Pandemic' (Strengthening waste management policies to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic), considering the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In closing, Prof Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA, expressed his appreciation of all participants and the AIPA Secretariat's efforts and confirmed ERIA's continuous intellectual contribution to support the MPs' political commitments and implementations for better waste management in a 'new normal' society.