

# The ASEAN



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## CLIMATE CHANGE

The Time to Act is Now

ISSN 2721-8058



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### THE INSIDE VIEW

ASEAN on the Front Lines  
of Climate Change

### SNAPSHOTS

ASEAN Ministerial and  
Other Related Meetings

### SHIFTING CURRENTS

Interview with Global Leader:  
Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland



● Ministerial Bodies ● Sectoral Bodies \* takes guidance from and reports to both AMCA and AMRI

**AMRI**-ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information  
**AMCA**-ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts  
**AMMY**-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Youth  
**ASED**-ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting  
**AMMS**-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports  
**AMRDPE**-ASEAN Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication  
**AMMSWD**-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development  
**AMMW**-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women  
**ALMM**-ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting  
**ACCSM**-The Heads of Civil Service Meeting for ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters  
**AHMM**-ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting

**AMMDM**-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management  
**COP-AADMER**-Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response  
**AMME**-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment  
**COP to AATHP**-Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution  
**SOMCA**-Senior Officials Meeting on Culture and Arts  
**COCI\***-The ASEAN Committee for Culture and Information  
**SOMRI**-Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information  
**SOMY**-Senior Officials Meeting on Youth  
**SOMED**-Senior Officials Meeting on Education  
**SOMS**-Senior Officials Meeting on Sports

**SOMRDPE**-Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication  
**SOMSWD**-Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development  
**ACWC**-ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children  
**ACW**-ASEAN Committee on Women  
**SLOM**-Senior Labour Officials Meeting  
**SOM-ACCSM**-Senior Officials Meeting on ASEAN Cooperation on Civil Service Matters  
**SOMHD**-Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development  
**ACDM**-ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management  
**ASOEN**-ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment  
**COM to AATHP**-Committee under the Conference of Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution



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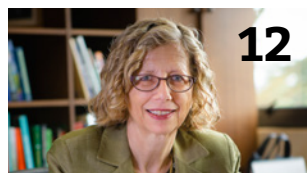
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# A Note from the Editorial Team

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacted a devastating toll on lives and economies around the world. It is easy to forget that another crisis—climate change—still looms before us. Experts remind us that global warming will have even more disastrous effects, in the long term, if urgent action is not taken now.

Southeast Asia is one of the regions most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of rising global temperatures. In this issue, Cambodian Environment Minister Say Samal, who chairs the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment, talks about the measures ASEAN is taking to avert and adapt to these risks. ASEAN Member States remain committed to cut emissions and decarbonise their economies.

Five years ago, nations pledged to cut carbon emissions to help keep the global temperature rise well below 2°C. Progress on these targets would have been assessed at this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference or COP26. While it has been postponed due to the pandemic, the United Kingdom, as COP26 host, says climate change action has not been derailed.

ASEAN's partners and experts expound on mitigation and adaptation measures that our nations need to build sustainable and resilient communities. In one of our featured articles, UN Environment Programme Executive Director and UN Under-Secretary-General Ingrid Andersen points out that climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are the "triple planetary crisis" that threatens human lives and the earth's valuable ecosystems.

Distinguished global leader Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland shares her views on

sustainable policies that nations need to implement to fight climate change, prevent disease, prepare for disasters, and protect the most vulnerable. Each crisis we face exacerbates the world's inequalities: the poor, disadvantaged, and vulnerable populations will always be hit the hardest.

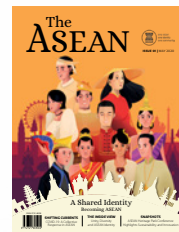
The pandemic has exposed these inequalities even more. ASEAN Economic Community Deputy Secretary-General Aladdin D. Rillo expounds on the COVID-19 impact on the region and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, stressing the importance of regional and international cooperation.

In the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting and other related meetings this September, ASEAN forged stronger partnerships with its partners, not just in the pandemic response, but in building a more cohesive and resilient community.

In April, as economic activities were either halted or paused worldwide, a decrease in carbon emissions was reported. Experts warn the decrease makes a small dent in the amount of emissions that must be cut by 2030 to prevent a temperature rise above the target of 1.5°C.

It is a delicate balance that nations and leaders need to achieve, as businesses, families, and communities struggle to survive in this pandemic. It may serve us well to learn lessons from this crisis and implement sustainable solutions for a healthier and greener world.

Climate change is a threat we can no longer ignore. The time to act is now.



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# THE INSIDE VIEW

| ASEAN on the front lines  
of climate change

*Jatiluwi Rice Terraces and  
Agung volcano at sunrise,  
Bali, Indonesia*

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## Viewpoint:

**H.E. Say Samal**

Minister of Environment, Cambodia

Chair, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment

**What are ASEAN's commitments, at the national and regional levels, to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions? Can you elaborate on policies, programmes, initiatives, and innovations within the region to meet these commitments?**

**Minister Say Samal:** ASEAN commitments towards climate change responses date back to the early 1990s, when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was formulated and ratified. ASEAN is fully committed to the objectives of the Paris Agreement and has played active and leadership roles in addressing climate change issues in the global community. The ASEAN Leaders have reaffirmed continuously our commitments to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement—in alignment with the broader outcomes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ASEAN Declarations, Statements, and events have been regularly released and organised, for instance, the **Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Climate Action** and an expanded session with partners in 2018 to respond to the Talanoa Dialogue. With the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, the governance system, strategy, and action plan on environment and climate change have been established and implemented.

I would like to highlight that all the ASEAN Member States are parties to UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. Member States have proactively taken measures to address the issue at local, national, regional levels by setting various mechanisms, policies, strategies, and action plan for greenhouse gas reduction and climate adaptation. Regularly, Member States report their progress and achievements in climate action in their respective countries, and especially during each Conference of Parties session of UNFCCC. Currently



countries are working on the updates to their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), which set concrete targets for each country to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change by 2030. Although the commitment to greenhouse gas reduction targets is voluntary for least developed countries like Cambodia, setting clear targets demonstrates ASEAN Member States' serious commitment to addressing this disastrous global threat. Alongside, ASEAN is working closely with many partners and international organisations at various levels to advance climate action in the region through joint initiatives or policy dialogues, such as the annual **ASEAN-EU High Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change**.

One of the key commitments made by ASEAN is to achieve a 21.9 per cent reduction in energy intensity compared to 2005 levels. This exceeds the 2020 target set by the **ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation 2016–2025**. There are also other initiatives being developed

to target specific sectors, such as the **ASEAN Fuel Economy Roadmap for the Transport Sector 2018–2025**.

To expedite climate action and the achievement of NDC ambitions, the ASEAN Member States, partners, and international organisations may need to continue and further enhance international cooperation and assistance, post-pandemic, in the area of financing, the transfer of technology, and capacity-building, for both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

**The effects of global warming, e.g. destructive typhoons, drought, are felt by many communities in Southeast Asia. How is ASEAN addressing these challenges?**

**Minister Say Samal:** Resilience and adaptation to climate change are ranked as the top priority for ASEAN as stipulated in the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together. The ASEAN region is one of the world's most climate disaster-prone regions, in which several of the ASEAN Member



States, including Cambodia, are listed as among the most vulnerable countries in the world. For this reason, Cambodia has national adaptation plans prepared along with existing interventions in place.

ASEAN is working to complement national responses through regional initiatives, namely **ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response**, which includes mechanisms to improve our joint responses to emergencies related to extreme climate events. Adhering to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, Member States have fully committed to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk, reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disasters, and increase preparedness for response and recovery, thus strengthening resilience. Additionally, there is an ongoing effort to establish a **Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility**, aiming to improve disaster risk assessment, and financing and insurance solutions. At the same time, ASEAN continues to mainstream disaster risk reduction (DRR) into climate change adaptation (CCA) policy by (i) facilitating the establishment of a clear institutional and policy framework on DRR and CCA integration at the regional and national level, and (ii) supporting capacity building initiatives for the Member States on hazard and risk mapping through integration of future climate change projections to minimise the potential impacts posed by drought, floods, and landslide disasters.

Again, to ramp up our efforts to tackle climate risks, further stepping up collocation, partnership development, and cross-sectoral coordination are essential for building stronger resilience against disasters.

**To what extent has ASEAN engaged the private sector and civil society in efforts to reduce the region's carbon emission and to respond to the impact of climate change on our communities?**

**Minister Say Samal:** As reflected in the ASCC Blueprint, ASEAN is committed to lifting the quality of life of its peoples through cooperative activities that are people-oriented, people-centred, and geared towards the promotion of sustainable development. In line with the motto, "ASEAN is a Community of

“

**Climate change is now a major threat to Cambodia's economy and society. Water resources are under stress, which impact both agriculture and health in rural areas, with women and children among the most vulnerable groups.**

Opportunities for All," ASEAN is open to work as a community. ASEAN works collaboratively with many partners, international organisations, civil societies, and the private sector at different levels and sectors dealing with climate change issues. For example, civil society constituencies recently had an interface with the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change and submitted their Statement to be taken into account in the formulation of the ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change at the UNFCCC COP26. Annual ASEAN Climate Change Partnership Conferences, among others, also provides a platform for dialogue and engagement with various stakeholders and actors, including relevant sectoral bodies, partners, civil society and private sector, to join hands in addressing climate change.

Moreover, ASEAN Member States have established numerous mechanisms and initiatives at their respective countries to engage the private sector and civil society in climate change responses. In Cambodia, the civil society and the private sector are integrated in our policy dialogue mechanisms. They act as partners to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the implementation of adaptation or mitigation programmes. They have an essential role to play, based on their comparative advantages. Civil society organisations support effective engagement of affected communities, while private investment is crucial for financing climate change response.

**How has Cambodia been impacted by climate change? Can you share with us Cambodia's policies, programmes, or strategies for addressing climate change challenges?**

**Minister Say Samal:** Climate change is now a major threat to Cambodia's economy and society. Water resources are under stress, which impact both

agriculture and health in rural areas, with women and children among the most vulnerable groups. Higher temperatures can impact worker productivity and health in key sectors of our economy, including not only agriculture, but also manufacturing and construction. Extreme weather events have become more frequent and the costs of maintaining and upgrading our infrastructures have gone up.

Addressing climate change is identified as one of the key priorities for Cambodia. Our national budget allocation for climate-related initiatives has almost quadrupled in the last 10 years. The following are some of the policies and programmes that Cambodia has adopted and implemented to respond to climate change impacts:

- Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014-2023 was developed to guide Cambodia towards a green, low-carbon, climate-resilient, equitable, sustainable, and knowledge-based society. It also aims to reduce vulnerability of the most vulnerable groups and critical (natural and social) systems to climate change impacts, and to shift towards a green development path by promoting low-carbon development and technologies, and to promote awareness and participation of the public in climate change response action.
- In addition, the Rectangular Strategy was developed to minimise environmental impacts, enhance the capacity to adapt to climate change, and contribute to reducing the global climate change to ensure sustainable development. It also promotes the implementation of measures to prevent and reduce communicable diseases by cooperating with the community and stakeholders to raise awareness on



*Forest near Tonle Sap lake,  
Cambodia*

hygiene, food safety, healthcare, effects of chemical products, alcohol and tobacco, and impacts of climate change on human health.

- At the same time, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) was designed to meet Cambodia's commitments to climate change action, including decarbonisation of the economy. It includes the management of the environment and natural resources, which are key for sustainability and stability of Cambodia's economic growth and development. The NSDP also includes a Strategic Plan for Gender and Climate Change, Disaster Management and Green Development and a Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (2013-2022).
- Nationally Determined Contributions set out the national approach to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate, as part of the Paris Agreement signed in COP 21 in Paris in 2015. The increased ambition through the NDC process covers mitigation commitment, adaptation action, finance, transparency framework, and governance. Cambodia expects to submit its NDC update by October 2020. In August 2020,

Cambodia submitted its First Biennial Update Report.

- National Green Growth Roadmap (2009) and National Policy on Green Growth and National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013-2030), which were launched in 2009 and 2013, respectively. The green growth policies aim to boost Cambodian economy towards a green economy, focusing on efficient use of natural resources, environmental sustainability, green jobs, green technology, and economic reform, placing more consideration into green incentives, such as green tax, green finance, more importantly green credit, green microfinance, and green investment.
- In 2015, the Royal Government of Cambodia established the National Council for Sustainable Development, an inter-ministerial body, that aims to promote sustainable development in Cambodia. Climate change mitigation and adaptation, green growth/green

economic development, and biodiversity conservation are some of key priorities of this Council.

- Our top priority is adaptation. Cambodia has adopted the National Adaptation Plan Financing Framework and Implementation Plan, and continues to mainstream climate resilience into development planning. A study on Public Perceptions of Climate Change in Cambodia (Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice) has also been conducted. Additionally, in order to minimise the impacts of climate change on our economy and society, Cambodia needs to build climate-proof infrastructures and to promote climate-resilient agriculture, along with delivering social services such as health and education, in the context of rising temperatures and extreme events, and to protect the health and productivity of our workers.

For a developing country like Cambodia, international support is crucial to achieve these objectives.

For climate mitigation, the Royal Government of Cambodia has been working with partners to implement a range of international interventions, including Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Credit Mechanism, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action, and Gold Standard and Verified Carbon Standard. We also see opportunities in promoting green growth/green economic development to fight against climate change by reducing greenhouse emissions. The share of solar power in our installed electricity production capacity has increased from zero to almost 10 per cent in the last four years. We have also launched initiatives to promote green buildings and made some significant progress in raising financial and technical support for forest conservation through the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) initiative.

This is an ongoing battle, which requires long-term global commitments. We look forward to continuous cooperation within the ASEAN and beyond to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change. ■



# CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL: THE ASEAN REGION IS BEARING ITS BRUNT



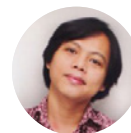
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**What does science say about climate change? The global community generally agrees on this definition of climate change by the United Nations: “a change of climate attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”**

Simply put, climate change is a long-term shift in global climate patterns such as temperature, rainfall, precipitation, over a long period of time. Human activities contribute to climate change by significantly increasing the amount of key greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) to the global atmosphere.

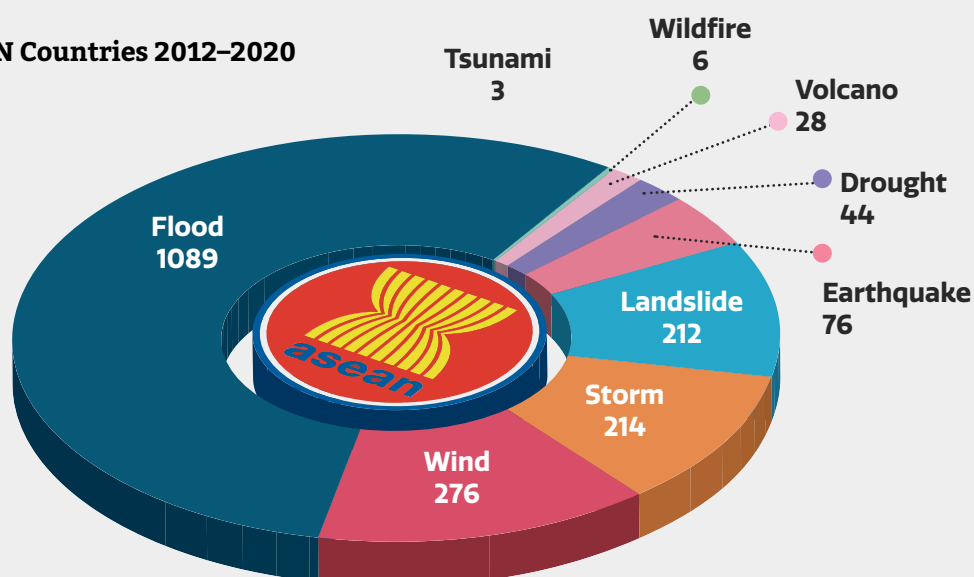
Scientific research confirms that the earth's climate is changing at an alarming rate. A series of the assessment reports of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted some key findings: an increase of global average temperature (0.55-0.67°C), warming of the oceans (0.4°C), the rise of global sea-level (0.3mm per year), a shift in rainfall pattern, ocean acidification, and

higher frequency and intensity of extreme climatological events.

Based on these findings, the global community adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the Paris Agreement in 2015, and agreed to strengthen efforts to cap a global temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial levels in this century.

**Types of Disasters in ASEAN Countries 2012–2020**

<b>Flood</b>	1089
<b>Wind</b>	276
<b>Storm</b>	214
<b>Landslide</b>	212
<b>Earthquake</b>	76
<b>Drought</b>	44
<b>Volcano</b>	28
<b>Wild fire</b>	6
<b>Tsunami</b>	3



Source: adinet, Jan 2012–24 Sept 2020



*Super Typhoon Haiyan, also known as Yolanda in the Philippines, was one of the most intense tropical cyclones on record. Tacloban, Leyte (pictured here) was one of the hardest hit areas.*

Nations signed on to pursue efforts that will limit the global temperature even further to 1.5°C. The Paris Agreement also aims to build up the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

### **How Does It Affect Us All? Vulnerability, Risks, and Impacts**

Climate change affects everyone at all levels, from global to local, but not to the same extent or scale. The ASEAN region is among the most vulnerable regions in the world, with long and heavily populated coastlines and heavy reliance on agriculture for livelihood, especially for a large segment of population living below the poverty line. The Global Climate Risk Index 2020, an index that analyses to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of climate-related loss events, shows that four of ASEAN countries are among the top 10 most affected from 1999 to 2018.

Climate change has exacerbated water shortages in many areas, constraining agricultural production and threatening food security, causing forest fires and degradation, damaging coastal and marine resources, and increasing the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases. Heat waves, droughts, floods, and tropical cyclones have also become more intense and frequent in many parts of the region, causing extensive damage to property,

assets, human life, and the environment. Extreme events and climatological disasters are associated closely with climate change such as flood, wind, storm, and drought.

In the last 45 years, the most economically damaging events in Southeast Asia that occurred were climate-related ones, namely the 2011 floods in Thailand, which caused over 45 billion US dollars worth of damage in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and Central Thailand, and Typhoon Yolanda (known internationally as Typhoon Haiyan) in the Philippines in 2013, which resulted in 10 billion US dollars worth of damage.

The projection on climate risks and impacts in the region is no less concerning. By 2100, sea level is projected to rise by 70 centimeters, which puts many important areas of Southeast Asia at risk with many productive activities found along the coastal zones and about 436 million people living within 100 kilometers of the region's coasts. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), 185 million people in Southeast Asia are likely to experience water stress by 2050. The annual flow of the Red River is projected to decline by 13 to 9 per cent, while the Mekong River will decline by 16 to 24 per cent, affecting 60 million people.

While total cyclone landfalls are expected to decrease in the Southeast Asian region, the intensity is projected to increase, with higher number of most destructive events. An increase in rainfall intensity with more concentrated periods is also expected. With the increase in the Earth's temperature, climate change is expected to lead to increased mortality from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases brought about by thermal stress and proliferation of water- and vector-borne diseases. In a study by ADB in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, deaths due to heat-related cardiovascular and respiratory diseases will rise by 3 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively, in 2050; and will increase by 10 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, by the end of the 21st century.

As agriculture is conditioned by temperature and rainfall, it would be

vulnerable to changes in climatic conditions. Southeast Asia's rice production, which covers nearly 30 per cent of the world's rice supply, is expected to suffer a decline of up to 5 per cent between 2010 and 2050. If left unchecked, climate change could cost the regional economic losses at an estimated 11 per cent off the region's GDP by the end of the century as it takes a toll on key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and fishing—along with human health and labor productivity—the ADB estimated in a 2015 report.

For the most vulnerable communities, the current COVID-19 pandemic only magnifies their exposure to risks. Disadvantaged populations face higher health threats because of inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, and health services. With the lack of suitable housing, job security and social protection, many of the poor, homeless, or displaced are unable to self-isolate. Many of the factors that cause climate change also increase the risk of pandemics and zoonotic diseases. Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, believes that "humanity needs to address these two fundamental, existential crises together," and that a COVID-19 recovery needs to include and integrate climate change in all decision-making and policy decisions.

### **What Can We Do About It? Adaptation, Mitigation, and Resilience**

As a dynamic and developing region, ASEAN has seen greenhouse gas emission growth to be almost as fast as economic growth, with a nearly 5 per cent annual increase over the last two decades. Deforestation and land use account for 55 per cent of 2010 emissions, while the fastest areas of relative emissions growth come from electricity, manufacturing, and transportation—sectors that are associated with the region's progressive development.

Addressing the risks posed by climate change requires substantial mitigation and adaptation action. Mitigation refers to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or enhance carbon sinks. This could be achieved by reducing land-use emissions, increasing the



efficiency of energy usage, and replacing carbon-intensive fuels with cleaner alternatives. Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. Adaptation can range from building flood defences, setting up early warning systems for cyclones and switching to drought-resistant crops, to redesigning communication systems, business operations and government policies.

Mitigation is crucial to address the main root cause and to avoid catastrophic long-term impacts, while adaptation is necessary to cope with the unavoidable impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing today.

ASEAN Member States, as parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, have set national voluntary targets with the accompanying mitigation and adaptation actions in their Nationally Determined Contributions. Together with the commitments to the global climate agenda, Member States have adopted national plans specific to climate change, for example, Viet Nam's National Climate Change Strategy (2011-2020) and Action Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector (2008-2020), and Myanmar's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2030). In addition, Member States are developing their national climate change institutional infrastructure by establishing teams or platforms dedicated to handling climate change action. For example, Cambodia has a National Climate Change Committee that oversees the preparation, coordination, implementation and monitoring of climate change policies, strategies and programmes.

Collectively at the regional level, ASEAN Leaders have regularly issued Joint Statements related to climate change which highlight ASEAN's common concerns over the climate change challenge and its resolve towards a global solution. Climate change is a long standing priority in ASEAN Blueprints as well as ASEAN Chairmanships. Under the leadership

of Singapore as ASEAN Chair in 2018, for example, a **Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Climate Action** was organised to contribute to the UNFCCC processes. ASEAN also set up an ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) to coordinate regional initiatives to support ASEAN Member States in implementing mitigation and adaptation measures. Specifically on renewable energy, ASEAN has set and exceeded its energy efficiency target, reducing energy intensity by more than 21.9 per cent compared to 2005 levels, well ahead of its 2020 target. ASEAN will continue to work towards the region's long-term target to reduce energy intensity by 30 per cent by 2025. Additionally, ASEAN also set a target to increase the component of renewable energy mix by 23 per cent by 2025. On land transport, ASEAN aims to reduce the average fuel consumption per 100 kilometers of new light-duty vehicles sold in ASEAN by 26 per cent between 2015 and 2025. Climate change initiatives are undertaken by various relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies such as environment, forestry, agriculture, energy, transport, and disaster management.

As climate change is a global challenge of cross-cutting nature, cross-sectoral coordination and multi-stakeholder participation have been essential elements in ASEAN's efforts to combat climate change. ASEAN has been working closely with dialogue and development partners on a wide range of climate change related initiatives and building multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms to promote awareness, exchange experiences, share successful approaches and innovation and initiate collaborative action to strengthen climate resilience. To support global partnership and cross-sectoral coordination of different sectors and stakeholder groups, ASEAN regularly organises the ASEAN Climate Change Partnership Conference, as a forum for relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies and dialogue and development partners to share experiences, views and explore potential cooperation in addressing the adverse impacts on climate change in the region, as well as to contribute to the implementation of the AWGCC Action Plan and the Paris Agreement. With

people-centred approach in mind, ASEAN also engages various stakeholders, from academia to youth, in its regional initiatives to promote evidence-based decision making and raise awareness. The important role of youth as future leaders, for example, is recognised through the declaration by the ASEAN Leaders that 25 November every year should be commemorated as the ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day.

### The Way Forward

Climate change is a complex multifaceted issue, and in spite of the extensive efforts at local, national and regional level, it is still happening in a rapid and alarming rate in the ASEAN region. Addressing this challenge adequately will require innovative coordinated solutions that everyone should be part of, from public and private sector, civil society, youth, to every one of us. There are opportunities to enhance knowledge exchange, technologies, capacity building, awareness raising and behavioural change, to contribute to the transformation necessary to combat climate change.

ASEAN envisions a resilient community with enhanced capacity and capability to adapt and respond to social and economic vulnerabilities, disasters, climate change as well as emerging threats, and challenges. While the world's attention has now temporarily shifted from the global climate agenda to addressing the COVID-19 challenge, the pandemic has presented both an enormous challenge and tremendous opportunities for a climate-smart, and green recovery. A low-carbon recovery could not only initiate the significant greenhouse gas emission reductions needed to achieve net zero by 2050, but also have the potential to create more job opportunities and economic growth than a high-carbon recovery would.

Fully recognising the need to act with greater urgency to respond to the climate change crisis, ASEAN is committed to further enhancing its collaborative actions on climate change with partners and stakeholders to facilitate the development of comprehensive and coherent regional response to climate change challenges. ■



# THE TRIPLE PLANETARY CRISIS

**BY INGER ANDERSEN**  
**UNITED NATIONS UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL**  
**AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen talks about the need for urgent action, as the world and the region face multiple environmental threats.**

A triple planetary crisis is putting our home under extreme pressure. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are threatening humanity's prosperity and well-being as no environmental problems ever have. These threats are being felt acutely in Southeast Asia. Climate change in particular will have an enormous impact on the region. According to the Climate Risk Index, five of the 20 countries most affected by climate change are located in ASEAN. But all ASEAN countries are at risk.

There are a number of reasons for concern.

The countries of ASEAN together have one of the longest coastlines in the world, where many cities and economic activities are concentrated. Climate change is likely to raise sea levels and increase extreme weather events that will displace or kill people, damage infrastructure, and disrupt commerce in these population and economic centers. The World Meteorological Organization has predicted extreme weather throughout 2020. Reality unfortunately continues to hold true to these scientific forecasts.

Another worry is that the economy and livelihoods of ASEAN Member States are heavily reliant on agriculture, natural resources like fisheries, and forestry. Climate change, along with biodiversity loss and pollution, are already wreaking havoc on the natural patterns and processes that these industries rely on.

Compounding these issues is that poverty remains widespread in many places in Southeast Asia. Climate change disproportionately affects the poor, who live in threatened areas, work in threatened sectors, and who rarely have a safety net when things take a turn for the worse.

For a long time, these vulnerabilities could be spoken of in the future tense. But more





frequent and stronger natural disasters are telling us: the impacts are here now.

If the impacts of this triple planetary crisis are at hand, so must be our response.

The ASEAN region, alongside the world, will have to adapt to this new reality.

If nothing is done, the economic impact could be devastating. The Asian Development Bank estimated that climate change could shave 11 per cent off the region's GDP by the end of the century. In the absence of technical breakthroughs, rice yields in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam could drop by as much as 50 per cent by 2100 from 1990 levels.

Problems are, of course, more than economic. Human health will suffer. Hotter weather is pushing tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue fever northward to countries like Lao PDR where historically they have not been as prevalent.

But adaptation alone will be insufficient. We cannot go back to the old ways of doing things, relying on pollutive energy sources for unsustainable consumption and production.

We must address climate change head on.

There is no question climate change has largely been caused by advanced economies. But today, developing economies like those in Southeast Asia are the ones with steadily increasing emissions. Southeast Asia is one of only a handful of regions where coal demand is projected to rise over the coming decades, according to the International Energy Agency. This growing reliance on coal and oil, alongside deforestation, will only aggravate the climate change impacts.

The triple planetary crisis may feel secondary when compared with the immediacy of deep economic recession brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. But it is no less pressing.

What's more, there may be a mutual solution to all of these problems.

“ .....

**Public funding will be directed in unprecedented amounts toward the recovery from the pandemic. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to drive the green transition with these funds.**



The UN Secretary-General has laid out six principles that should drive the recovery from the pandemic. They are all fundamentally related to solving the climate crisis as the world rebuilds.

Public funding will be directed in unprecedented amounts toward the recovery from the pandemic. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to drive the green transition with these funds. They should be directed to creating green jobs and sustainable growth. They should back nature-based solutions and green research and development. They should not subsidise fossil fuels.

What does this look like for ASEAN? The International Renewable Energy Agency showed Southeast Asia could meet about 41 per cent of all of its energy needs from renewable energy by 2030. In so doing, some 6.7 million green jobs would be created by 2050.

Energy efficiency in ASEAN is another large target for improvement. With energy-efficient lighting, refrigerators and air conditioners, by 2040 the

ASEAN region could prevent emissions of over 100 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Consumers would save almost 17 billion US dollars annually on electricity.

The UN Environment Programme is supporting these efforts, working closely with the ASEAN Center for Energy to develop harmonised standards for lighting and air conditioners. In addition, UNEP is working with countries on standards and labelling for energy-efficient products. And through our Cool Coalition, we are connecting over 100 members to take joint action to transition to climate friendly cooling.

ASEAN has one of the highest urbanisation and motorisation rates in the world, contributing to high rates of emissions. Countries can prioritise electrification of public transport, focusing on moving people instead of cars. At the same time, authorities can improve management of railways, buses and taxis—not to mention *songthaews*, *angkots*, *jeepneys*, and *tuktuks*.





Alongside efforts on e-vehicles and fuel efficiency, UNEP is helping develop fuel economy policy for light-duty vehicles in several ASEAN states and the ASEAN Fuel Economy Roadmap, which aims to reduce the average fuel consumption of new light-duty vehicles sold in ASEAN by 26 per cent between 2015 and 2025.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation need not only come from urban and technology improvements.

For example, UNEP is supporting efforts in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar to improve resilience to climate change by protecting, maintaining, and rehabilitating priority ecosystems.

Reducing deforestation would significantly reduce emissions. The UN Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) programme, a joint effort between UNEP, the UN Development Programme,

“ .....

**We are facing a deeply uncertain future. The global pandemic and economic recession may be top of mind, but the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution lurk at the edges of our current predicament.**

and the Food and Agriculture Organization, is leading efforts in this area in Indonesia and elsewhere.

Rice, a staple crop for the region, generates up to 20 per cent of human-produced methane, a potent greenhouse gas. The UNEP-led Sustainable Rice Platform is working to tackle this by advancing sustainable rice farming practices throughout the region, which reduce emissions, boost farmers' incomes and make crops more resilient to natural disasters. A new UNEP-backed label, which identifies sustainably grown rice in

supermarkets around the world, offers farmers further incentive to switch.

We are facing a deeply uncertain future. The global pandemic and economic recession may be top of mind, but the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution lurk at the edges of our current predicament. A recovery from the former can and should drive a solution to the latter.

For ASEAN, there are many ways to imbue momentum into a green transition. UNEP remains, as always, ready to support. ■



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# CLIMATE CHANGE 101



Photo Credit: © Novia D. Rulistia

## GREENHOUSE GASES:

Greenhouse gases refer to carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases that trap the sun's heat in the atmosphere, keeping the surface of the earth warm. They are produced from natural phenomena such as volcanic eruptions and wildfires, as well as human activities, such as energy production and distribution, transportation, industrial processes, and agricultural production. Carbon dioxide emissions, mostly from burning fossil fuels to supply global energy demands, comprise the biggest share of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere.

## GLOBAL WARMING VS. CLIMATE CHANGE:

Global warming occurs when the earth's surface temperature rises as a result of increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Climate change refers to the long-term and large-scale shift in the earth's climate. It encompasses global warming and includes melting ice caps, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events.

## CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION:

Mitigation pertains to human interventions to reduce the sources of emissions (e.g. use of clean and renewable energies instead of fossil fuels), or preserve and enhance natural "sinks" (e.g. oceans, forests, grasslands, coastal wetlands) to reabsorb carbon from the atmosphere.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION:

Adaptation refers to the process of adjustment in response to actual or expected climate condition and its effects. It seeks to prevent or lessen harm to populations at risk, or exploit beneficial opportunities. Adaptation covers a range of measures, such as upgrading of infrastructure and building designs, installation of sea defences, retreat from low-lying coastal areas, use of water conservation techniques, and shift to drought-resistant crops.

## DECARBONISATION:

Decarbonisation is the process of reducing carbon emissions associated with energy production and consumption. It involves widespread use of renewable energy sources, such as solar power and wind power, to reduce demand for fossil fuels. It also involves the conscious selection and use of 'cleaner' technologies and consumer goods, such as electric vehicles.

## UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC):

The convention aims to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system" and to ensure that this level is "achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner." It was adopted in May 1992 and entered into force in 1994. The UNFCCC has been signed by 197 parties as of May 2018.

## PARIS AGREEMENT:

The agreement is one of the two treaties that seek to implement the UNFCCC (the other treaty is the Kyoto Protocol). The agreement aims to maintain the global average temperature to "well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and strive to "limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels." The agreement was adopted in December 2015 and entered into force in November 2016. As of May 2018, the agreement had 195 signatories and was ratified by 177 parties.

## CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP):

The COP is the main decision-making body of the UNFCCC. It is composed of all states that are parties to the convention. The body reviews the implementation of the UNFCCC, particularly the measures undertaken by the parties to determine the progress made in achieving the objective of the convention. The COP has been holding an annual meeting since 1995.

Sources: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, National Aeronautics and Space Administration



Viewpoint:

# INTERVIEW WITH KEN O'FLAHERTY AND JON LAMBE

**The 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was set to take place in November 2020, has been postponed to November 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this section, COP26 Regional Ambassador to Asia-Pacific and South Asia, Ken O'Flaherty, and the United Kingdom Ambassador to ASEAN, Jon Lambe, discuss the priorities and plans of the UK, as COP26 President, in the year leading up to the conference. They also talk about possible areas of collaboration between the UK and ASEAN on climate change issues.**



**Ken O'Flaherty**

*COP26 Regional Ambassador to Asia-Pacific and South Asia*

## **What is the significance of the COP26 and what are the priorities of the UK presidency for COP26?**

Five years ago in Paris, world leaders, including all 10 ASEAN countries, came together to sign a historic agreement to tackle climate change. Under the Paris Agreement, the parties committed to keeping global temperature rises well below 2°C and to strive to limit the rise to 1.5°C. In November 2021, the UK, in partnership with Italy, will host the COP26 UN climate conference. This will be a critical moment to reiterate the commitments made in Paris, and to mobilise more ambitious action on climate change.

The challenge is clear. Without urgent action we will not keep climate change to 1.5°C, or even 2°C. Under the UK's Presidency of COP26, we are working hard to engage governments, businesses, and societies worldwide to deliver strong climate action bringing together action on the clean energy transition, nature-



**Jon Lambe**

*UK Ambassador to ASEAN*

based solutions, finance, adaptation and resilience, and transport between now and November next year.

Accelerating the clean energy transition is one of our key priorities under our Presidency, particular as the International Energy Agency has assessed that the global transition to clean power needs to progress four times faster than at present if we are to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. This transition is particularly important in Southeast Asia, which is a major driver of the global economy with increasing energy demand, and where a large pipeline of fossil fuel—and particularly coal—projects are planned.

As the COP26 Presidency, the UK is committed to increasing momentum on climate action through enhanced ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Five years on from the Paris Agreement, COP26 is the first time



that countries should reassess their NDCs. We recognise that COVID-19 has created immense challenges. However we believe that climate ambition is an essential component to a strong, global economic recovery from the pandemic. Furthermore, the UK's experience shows that it can generate economic growth, create employment and foster international investment whilst reducing emissions, allowing us to meet our collective Paris Agreement targets.

## **How is the UK planning to raise awareness on the COP26 agenda in the Southeast Asian region?**

The UK is working closely with the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Member States, and other regional partners to mobilise engagement on climate change. We are organising events and activities in the lead up to COP26, especially focussing on the region's priorities.

On 24 and 25 September, the UK COP26 Presidency, in collaboration with ASEAN and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), is hosting a virtual ASEAN-COP26 Climate Dialogue on



Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies (LTS). The ASEAN-COP26 Climate Dialogue will offer a forum for senior government officials from all ASEAN Member States to share their experiences in meeting and enhancing their climate pledges under the Paris Agreement through NDC enhancement and implementation. The dialogue will provide an opportunity for ASEAN Member States to exchange lessons on developing LTS, building on the experience from practitioners and experts.

Looking forward towards COP26, we will collaborate closely with ASEAN partners on joint events on covering a range of COP26 priorities, including nature-based solutions, adaptation and resilience, and accelerating the clean energy transition in Southeast Asia.

#### **Do you think that climate action has been derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

While countries are rightly focusing on fighting the immediate health crisis and economic challenges posed by COVID-19, we must not lose sight of the huge challenges presented by climate change. This is why taking action to tackle climate change—domestically and with our international partners—remains a top priority for the UK Government.

COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented shutdown of large parts of the global economy with severe consequences for all countries. The UK strongly supports the message from the UN Secretary-General that governments should ensure a clean, green, and resilient recovery. As COP26 Presidency, we will uphold the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as crucial frameworks to guide this recovery. We are encouraging governments to target their economic stimulus packages towards the green tech and renewables sectors. This green recovery will create employment in the industries of the future and address the linked challenges of public health, climate change, and biodiversity.

A green recovery is not just the right thing to do in terms of climate change and reducing the health and environmental impacts of using fossil



fuels. It makes strong economic sense. Our experience in the UK shows that we do not have to choose between emissions reductions and GDP growth: the UK economy has grown by 75 per cent since 1990, at the same time as cutting its emissions by 43 per cent. New solar is already cheaper than new coal in all 10 ASEAN countries. Across the world, fast-falling renewable prices are challenging the financial viability of fossil fuel investments. New technologies will accelerate this trend, meaning that fossil fuel, notably coal, power plants will have a much shorter period of financial viability.

#### **What are the areas of cooperation between the UK and ASEAN on climate change issues? How can this cooperation be strengthened?**

The UK is a long-standing partner of ASEAN, in particular on low carbon growth, sustainability, and climate change. Having recently applied to become a Dialogue Partner to ASEAN, we see this as a special opportunity to strengthen collaboration on climate and green issues in coming years, building on existing UK cooperation with the region.

Across ASEAN, the UK's 15 million pound ASEAN Low Carbon Energy Programme focuses on green finance and energy efficiency transitions in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. In the Philippines, the programme has helped the government set up a market for renewable energy. In Myanmar, it is helping the Ministry of Electricity attract international finance by developing standards for solar and wind energy. Through the 13 million pound Mentari UK-Indonesia Low Carbon Energy Partnership, we are supporting Indonesia

to become a renewable energy superpower by harnessing its abundant solar, wind, and other clean technology potential to drive sustainable economic growth.

We recently concluded the first window in our new 12 million pound Green Recovery Challenge Fund, which aims to support innovation in green finance and zero emissions transport across Asia. At a global scale, the UK has doubled its spending on international climate change projects to 11.6 billion pound over 2021-2026, which will include projects across ASEAN.

Beyond these programmes, we also seek to collaborate more closely with ASEAN on sharing best practice and expertise, including our experience of developing our NDC and LTS at the upcoming ASEAN-COP26 Climate Dialogue, and sharing UK expertise in pairing climate action with economic growth.

Despite the benefits of decarbonisation, the world is not yet on track to meet the commitments of the Paris Agreement. This is why the next five years are critical for enhanced climate action. This is especially true in Southeast Asia, which has some of the most climate-vulnerable countries and will suffer some of the worst and most immediate impacts of climate change. We must work together to overcome this challenge. That is why the UK's COP26 Presidency stresses international collaboration to deliver a green and resilient recovery. We look forward to working closely with ASEAN and its Member States to achieve an ambitious, shared outcome at COP26. ■



# CLIMATE CHANGE: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE ASEAN COMMUNITY



**BY JOY JACQUELINE PEREIRA, PhD**

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**Climate change is inevitable; humanity and its ecosystems have already been impacted by warming of 1°C since pre-industrial times and humanity is on the path towards global warming of 1.5°C, with the expected emergence of unprecedented climatic conditions over the next decade.**

Can this disastrous track be altered? Yes, given that the key to creating a more secure and stable world has already begun with cooperation between countries under the Paris Agreement. All ASEAN Member States have ratified the Paris Agreement and several initiatives have been undertaken to mainstream climate change within the ASEAN community; one of these being the **Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together**. This was signed by all the Member States to complement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agreement mainstreams climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction for the whole region.

What then is climate change adaptation for the region? Adaptation involves anticipating the long-term adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise potential damage. It is more effective when complemented by immediate and near-term disaster risk reduction measures. This synergy draws upon shared information and goals, scientific, technical and financial support, engaging with targeted stakeholders and more. It has been shown that well planned, early action saves lives, and money.

Floods, droughts, windstorms, soil erosion, salt-water intrusion, sea-level rise, forest fires, land degradation, marine-life destruction, and attendant diseases are some of the climate-related threats projected in the region. With greater frequency and intensity of the hazards, many sectors will suffer devastating effects.

Hence, priority sectors are being identified in countries in the region to lead the way for mitigation plans and actions. For example, in agriculture, the decrease in rice grain yield impacts rice production and affects the lives and livelihoods of many. The health sector needs vital attention; water and vector-borne diseases like malaria and dengue can result in high fatalities. Water-related and coastal hazards affect sectors such as fisheries and tourism. Marine biomass production will be affected and fish catch potential will be reduced. All countries in the region have identified projected temperature increase, dry conditions, and forest fires that will affect populations, plants and livestock.

The impacts of climate change are also expected to be felt on the infrastructure resources in the ASEAN region. Coastal transport, ports and military installations would be increasingly exposed to rising sea levels, storm surges, and flooding. Extreme weather events in adjoining countries could affect energy production, transportation, and transmission, and impact regional energy security.

Building resilience to expected climate-related disasters due to global warming of 1.5°C alone is just not enough. Global warming could also trigger migration between countries; this could further exacerbate the existing demands placed on the various sectors, like food and clean water production.

But is migration an impact of climate change or is it an adaptation strategy? Some may dismiss this as semantics but depending on the platform of such discussions, there are repercussions, specifically on assigning accountability for human-induced climate change. The reality is that migration is an inevitable adaptation strategy in some cases. For example, when coastal lands beyond the shores of countries in the region are submerged due to sea level rise, affected communities have no choice but to migrate, and the ASEAN region may offer a closer, more hospitable alternative. Who is accountable for the plight of this community? These are difficult conversations that have to start immediately among countries in the region so that the challenge can be strategically addressed.

The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stressed that limiting global warming to 1.5°C is not impossible. Global political commitment and societal will are critical to



## Readiness of ASEAN Member States to Handle Region-Specific Projected Impacts of Climate Change



Land degradation from combined sea level rise and cyclones

9 Member States have medium level of readiness



Net reductions in the CO<sub>2</sub>-dependent nutritional quality of rice and wheat

10 Member States have medium level of readiness



Net reductions in yields of maize, rice, wheat, and potentially other cereal crops

Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam have high level of readiness; the rest have medium level of readiness



Increase in frequency, duration, extent and intensity of marine heatwaves by 20 times

9 Member States have medium level of readiness



Decrease in biomass of marine animal communities, production, and fisheries catch potential in all scenarios

8 Member States have medium level of readiness; one Member State has low level of readiness



Decline in ocean net primary production by 7–16%

8 Member States have medium level of readiness; one Member State has low level of readiness



Widespread challenges to fisheries governance in regional hotspots

9 Member States have low level of readiness

### Note:

State of readiness is based on adaptation measures reported in countries' respective National Communications (NC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

High Level of Readiness means projected impact is stated in the NC and adaptation measures are a priority; Medium Level of Readiness means projected impact is not stated in the NC but the associated sector is a priority for adaptation; Low Level of Readiness means projected impact is not stated in the NC nor is the associated sector a priority for adaptation, or projected impact has yet to be investigated by the Member State

**Source:** Joy Pereira & Rajib Shaw, *Southeast Asia: An Outlook on Climate Change*, In: *Climate Change Adaptation in Southeast Asia* (Springer Publishers, forthcoming)

accelerate transition; to reduce by half carbon dioxide emission by 2030, reaching net zero around 2050. Yes, the countries in the region only contribute to about 3 per cent of the total emission in the world today. Yes, the countries in the region are not the culprit for this global conundrum; but that is not the point. The point is that the countries in the region are poised to bear the greater brunt of the expected effects of global warming to 1.5°C. The projected impacts of climate change are geographically different. There will be areas that benefit and regions that will be severely impacted resulting in the erosion of decades of carefully planned development. Hence, is not ratcheting up fair and ethical transformation efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the way forward for the countries in the region?

Recent findings reveal that overall, there is only a medium level of readiness in handling the projected impacts, except for prioritised adaptation measures to address reduction in rice yields in several countries in the region such as Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. The impacts of extreme events associated with climate change are site specific; therefore, using the best available scientific information at the local level, with the involvement of the local expertise to develop adaptation plans that is integrated with disaster risk reduction, becomes necessary. The participatory process starts from the identification of areas that are susceptible to hazards, sources of vulnerability, development of adaptation planning and action, and to finally

setting the monitoring and evaluation framework. Pilot projects are being initiated in many countries at the local level. However, in order to achieve successful implementation on the ground, these initiatives should be action-oriented, have implicit capacity building, awareness raising, and mainstreaming components.

For adaptation plans in any country to be most effective, regional collaborations come into play. One such example is the **ASEAN Partner Institutions on Climate Change Adaptation or ASEANadapt**. Established in 2016 to facilitate smoother regional engagement, it came into fruition through research of the ASEAN-India Green Fund Project. ASEAN adapt is composed of researchers and practitioners from all Member States. By identifying national needs and priorities, ASEAN adapt is able to share locally tested tools, techniques, methods, approaches, and innovations that are applicable across the 10 Member States. Self-organised and self-sustaining long-term collaborative entities such as ASEANadapt should be recognised and brought under the aegis of ASEAN to scale-up their efforts.

In conclusion, transitioning to a 1.5°C World calls for cohesive collaboration to achieve astute adaptation, amplified engagement, inspired innovation, smart partnerships, and greater ambition on the part of ASEAN countries. ■





# ASSESSING CLIMATE CHANGE TRANSPARENCY AND TRANSFORMATION NEEDS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES



BY YOSUKE ARINO, PhD



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## ASEAN Member States have proactively taken measures to address the issue of climate change at the national and regional levels.

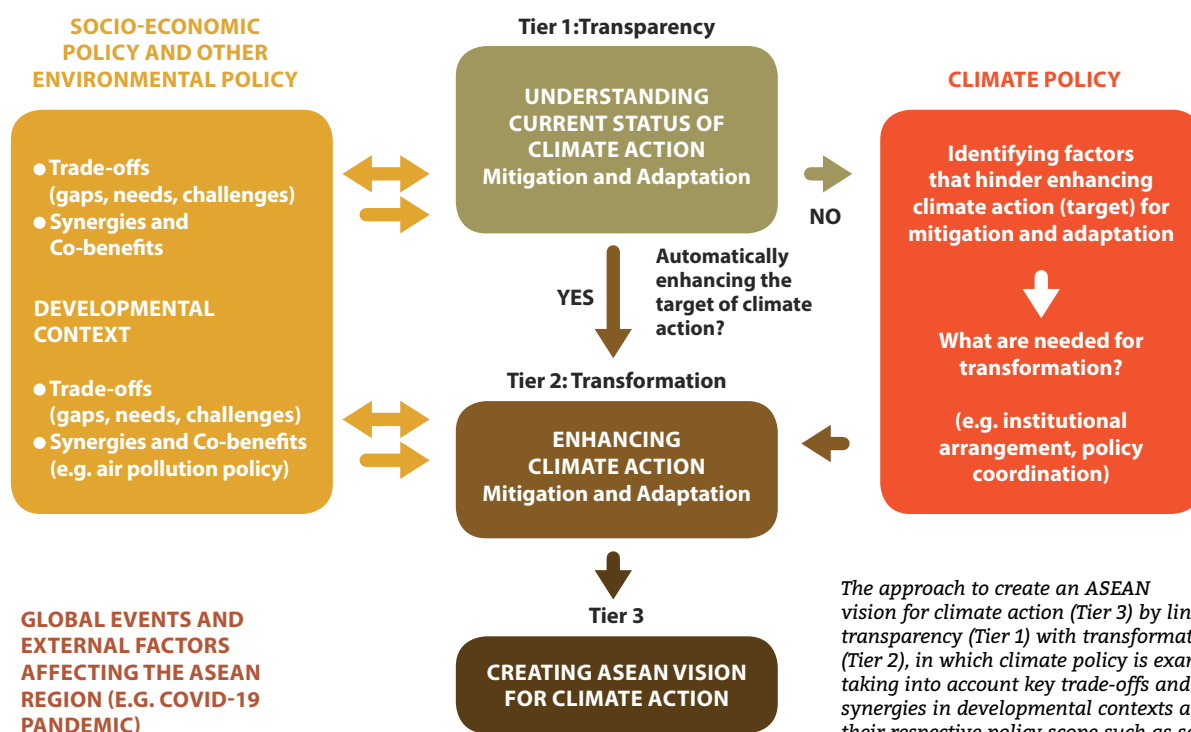
As parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the ASEAN Member States have also submitted regular reports and updates on target, plans, strategies, and related progress, some of which are part of the monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) processes. These processes include

among others the National Communications, Biennial Update Reports (to be upgraded to Biennial Transparency Reports), and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

However, some developing Member States have been facing challenges in meeting

their transparency reporting requirements due to capacity constraints. This suggests opportunities for improvement in their capacity and the need for strengthening cooperation in the region to respond to climate change.

The Paris Agreement established an upgraded framework, called the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), for enhancing transparency, especially in terms of tracking progress, on climate actions taken by countries (Article 13)



*The approach to create an ASEAN vision for climate action (Tier 3) by linking transparency (Tier 1) with transformation (Tier 2), in which climate policy is examined taking into account key trade-offs and synergies in developmental contexts and their respective policy scope such as socio-economic and other environmental policies.*



and reporting progress biennially. The ETF sets a mechanism of “global stocktake” to assess, every five years, the collective progress in achieving the adaptation and mitigation measures in the agreement. The ETF’s goal is to assess the enforceability of climate actions, such as Nationally Determined Contribution targets and relevant policies and measures, through a clearer quantitative/qualitative understanding of country priorities, needs and gaps, and good practices to inform the global stocktake. The outcome of global stocktake, which is based on the ETF status reports, determines the need for updating and enhancing national climate action and international cooperation for climate action (Article 14.3).

The Paris Agreement recognises that “transparency,” or the clear understanding of the actual situation of climate action and its developmental context, is expected to be the catalyst for “transformation” of climate action, or the setting of more ambitious national targets such as Nationally Determined Contributions to suit to the long-term goals of PA at the national, regional, and global levels (Matsuo, 2018).

Recognising the said capacity gaps in the ASEAN region, the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) project on the Development of the ASEAN State of Climate Change Report (ASCCR) has been implemented to provide the first ever overall outlook on the state of climate change in ASEAN and to support the planning processes of Member States on climate action. As the diagram shows, this report aims to develop an ASEAN vision for climate action (Tier 3) from the viewpoints of transparency (Tier 1) and transformation (Tier 2).

First, on the transparency of climate actions (Tier 1), the ASCCR will identify areas of opportunity for capacity building on adaptation and mitigation within the region by understanding current status, gaps/needs, and good practices for prioritised climate actions of each Member State. For example, aspects such as sharing scientific knowledge and data, assessment of modelling approaches to predict future greenhouse gas emissions and/or impacts, and key indicators to track the progress of



action among Member States will contribute to raising the enforceability of current targets on mitigation and adaptation through updated actions for MRV or monitoring and evaluation based on more accurate, reliable, and harmonised methods. Here, the emphasis is on the country context while keeping in view the regional diversity and uniformity.

Second, this kind of stocktaking exercise on the regional scale, contributing to ensuring transparency of actions, will further provide opportunities to transform the ambition of climate targets in each Member State and the region (Tier 2). This is achieved by attempting to identify key trade-offs (or challenges) and co-benefits for raising climate ambition by looking at the developmental contexts of each country and the region. Specific issues such as the co-benefits of air pollution in climate change mitigation and the recent issue of COVID-19 will provide a good insight into countries’ priorities and specific approaches. Properly identifying the influence of these global and regional phenomena relevant to the ASEAN region and ministries in each Member State can help the region and countries to update climate action targets more appropriately. This can result in more advanced institutional arrangements and policy coordination among relevant ministries for economic and social development. In this context, the project will also highlight the transboundary and cross-sectoral issues based on the priorities of each country.

Thus far, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and ASEAN collaboration, which is focused on adaptation, has provided valuable insights into regional adaptation needs especially from the viewpoint of institutional arrangement and coordination. Some of the work indicated that institutional arrangement for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in terms of policy formulation and organisational setup from national to sub-national levels is well developed in the Member States (IGES and CTII, 2018; Maeda, Prabhakar and Sivakoti, 2019). However, coordination among agencies in charge of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and other agencies in different Member States is often not so strong due to the barriers related to sectoral laws and associated institutional setup, such as different laws for the management of water resource, river structure, irrigation, land-use, forest, road, hydrology, meteorology, and disaster. Moreover, the institutional arrangement is still at a development stage in most countries, particularly for subjects that require intensive coordination among relevant agencies and local governments in a wide geographical coverage, such as water resources management and river management from upstream to downstream.

The scoping exercises conducted by Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and ASEAN also recognised that the integration of climate change projections into disaster risk assessments is at nascent stages and needs to be improved. For example, efforts have been taken up to improve the disaster risk assessments at the river basin level in selected river basins in Lao PDR and Myanmar for flood and landslide risk assessments (IGES, CTII and ADPC, 2020). These efforts are being further scaled up to enhance risk assessments and risk reduction planning in Cambodia and Viet Nam in the second phase of the collaborative efforts with ASEAN and JAIF.

Based on extensive work by various development partners of ASEAN as well as the aforementioned work by IGES, ASCCR will show how the ASEAN region will transform its communities into more resilient and climate-friendly ones beyond 2030 and onto 2050 through enhanced transparency of actions. ■

# CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE PEATLAND MANAGEMENT



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SHAHABUDIN**

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**Peatlands are the most extensive freshwater wetland ecosystem in the ASEAN region. They cover an estimated 23 million hectares of land (ASEAN Peatland Forests Project, 2014) and are found in all ASEAN Member States except Singapore.**

ASEAN's peatlands represent 40 per cent of the known tropical peatlands and six per cent of all peatlands worldwide. Indonesia has the largest peatland area followed by Malaysia.

Peatlands are unique wetland ecosystems, where partially decomposed organic matter accumulates over thousands of years under waterlogged conditions to form carbon-rich soil, or "peat." They are considered one of the hidden jewels of our living planet. Most peatlands in ASEAN are naturally forested and such peat swamp forests can sustain a high diversity of flora and fauna and provide numerous ecological benefits to us, such as freshwater supply, flood mitigation, climate regulation and carbon storage.

Peatlands globally are by far the most important terrestrial ecosystem for regulating climate change, storing more than 500 billion tonnes of carbon or nearly twice the carbon in the biomass of all the world's forests combined. Over the last 10,000 years, tropical peatlands have absorbed billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide, helping to cool the planet. ASEAN peatlands are up to 20 meters thick (the height of a 12-storey building). They can store 10-20 times more carbon compared to forests on mineral soil. Peatlands are the only ecosystem on land that forms fossil fuels—with 100 per cent of the world's coal and a portion of the gas and oil deposits being formed from peat over millions of years.

## The Challenges

Sadly, over the past 40 years, ASEAN's peatlands have faced severe degradation driven by economic activities ranging from logging, to agriculture and plantations, as well as infrastructure and mining. As a result, more than 60 per cent of peatlands have been degraded and more than 5 million hectares have been burnt. This degradation has released the stored carbon so that peatlands have changed from a carbon sink to a major emission source. Peatlands in Southeast Asia store about 70 billion tonnes of carbon, approximately 14 percent of the global peat carbon store. However, peatland degradation in ASEAN releases about 1.5-2 billion tonnes carbon dioxide or CO<sub>2</sub> per year or equivalent to 5 per cent of global fossil fuel emissions, contributing to conditions for global climate change.

The root cause of the degradation is the draining of water from naturally waterlogged peatlands. In their natural state, peatlands are 90 per cent water and 10 per cent organic matter by weight (there is a similar amount of solid matter in a glass of milk compared to an equivalent glass of peat). Peatlands act as massive sponges—absorbing water in the wet season and releasing it slowly in the dry season—regulating water flow and preventing floods. Drainage, for logging, agriculture or other developments, dries out the organic matter that makes up the peat which then decomposes and oxidises, releasing the carbon back to the atmosphere as CO<sub>2</sub>. The drying of the peatlands also makes them susceptible to fire. Once fires start, they can burn for months until the dried peat is all burnt. The unsustainable practise of using fire for land clearance has led to extensive and persistent fires during dry weather, becoming the source of about 90 per cent of transboundary smoke haze in the southern ASEAN region. This is recognised as one of ASEAN's most important environmental challenges and which has a severe impact on our health and socio-economic development.

Peatlands are also vulnerable to climate change. The main impacts are expected to be increasing temperatures by up to 2.5°C by the end of the century and a reduction in dry season rainfall. These two factors combined will lead to more rapid drying of peatlands and more extensive peatland fires—leading to more greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbating climate change.

## Simple Solutions

Fortunately, the solution to peatland degradation in theory is relatively simple: Stop the further drainage of peatlands and rehabilitate the degrading areas by restoring natural water levels or "rewetting" the peatlands. With increased water tables, the risk of peat decomposition and fires decreases and peatlands can





Indonesian firefighters try to extinguish peatland fire at Rumbai Pesisir Village in Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia

Photo Credit: ©Afrianto Silalahi/Shutterstock

recover and start storing carbon again. These same measures will also make the peatlands more resilient to future climate change and improve their function to store and supply water and prevent floods, which are key measures to assist in the adaptation to climate change. Unfortunately, in practice it is not so easy as many peatland areas have been converted to actively used agricultural and plantation land. And for other areas which have been degraded and abandoned, there is no one willing to spend the money to restore them.

### ASEAN Approach to Tackling Peat Degradation

Despite the challenges, there has been substantial progress in ASEAN in slowing, and in some cases reversing, the degradation of peatlands and building their resilience to climate change through the regional approach. After the large-scale fires and transboundary haze in 1997/1998, ASEAN Member States drafted the **ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP)** which was signed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2002. At the same time, the **ASEAN Peatland Management Initiative (APMI)** was formulated to enhance partnership in addressing peatland management. This led to the formal adoption in 2006 of the **ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS)** for a period of 2006-2020 to guide actions to enhance sustainable management of peatlands and prevent fires and transboundary haze.

The APMS sets out 25 operational objectives and 98 actions in 13 focal areas. Significant progress has been made in implementation with all the actions initiated and National Action Plans on Peatlands (NAPPs) being implemented in five Member States. The APMS is currently being formally reviewed to consider an extension until 2030. The review has indicated that good progress has been made in most Member States in promoting

## Peatlands

### The Most important Terrestrial Ecosystem

ASEAN PEATLANDS  
ARE UP TO **20M**  
THICK (12 STOREY)  
BUILDING HEIGHT

THEY CAN STORE **10-20 TIMES** CARBON  
COMPARED TO FORESTS  
ON MINERAL SOIL

.....  
THE ONLY ECOSYSTEM ON LAND THAT  
FORMS FOSSIL FUELS—WITH 100 PER CENT  
OF THE WORLD'S COAL AND A PORTION  
GAS AND OIL DEPOSITS FORMED FROM  
PEAT OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS  
.....



REGULATE CLIMATE CHANGE  
by storing 500 billion tonnes of carbon,  
or nearly twice the amount of all the  
world's forests combined

sustainable peatland management and focussing on prevention of peatland fires.

The APMS has stimulated the allocation of more than 50 million US dollars by a range of international partners such as the European Union, Global Environment Facility, and International Fund for Agricultural Development. Currently, the regional programme on Measurable Action for Haze Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia is supporting ASEAN Member States to implement the APMS. It is funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development and is being implemented by the ASEAN Secretariat, Global Environment Centre, and the Center for International Forestry Research. It is supporting capacity enhancement and knowledge exchange and aims to help to develop a financing framework of 1 billion US dollars to support sustainable peatland management and fire prevention in the region for the period of 2021-2030.

**The ASEAN Guidelines on Peatland Fire Management** was adopted in 2016 and represent a paradigm shift from firefighting to fire prevention approach. The Roadmap on ASEAN Cooperation towards **Transboundary Haze Pollution Control with Means of Implementation (ASEAN Haze-free Roadmap)** was adopted in 2016 and is also under review in 2020. The regional frameworks set strategies and targets and provide for regular meetings to review progress and adjust action plans.

### Mitigating Climate Change

Indonesia has made a commitment to reduce the intensity of its greenhouse gas emissions by 29-41 per cent by 2030 and has rolled out an ambitious national action plan with an emphasis on sustainable peatland and forest management. It established a

Peatland Directorate in the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2015 to implement the new Government Regulation on Protection and Management of Peatland Ecosystems. It set a strict requirement for maintenance of water levels in all peatlands and required the protection of a minimum of 30 per cent of each peatland hydrological unit. It currently oversees the active monitoring of water levels in more than 3.2 million hectares of peatland. Indonesia also established a peatland restoration agency in 2016 to stimulate the rewetting and rehabilitation of 2 million hectares of peatland in seven provinces. In mid-2020, the Indonesian Minister of Environment and Forests approved a long-term National Plan on Protection and Management of Peatland Ecosystems for 2020-2049. Together these actions constitute one of the most ambitious and successful peatland protection and rehabilitation programmes in the world.

In Malaysia, good progress has been made in multi-stakeholder engagement in the integrated management of peatland landscapes. An Integrated Management Plan for the North Selangor Peat Swamp Forest which covers more than 81,000 hectares and is critical for the water supply of one of the most productive rice schemes in Malaysia. It was developed with the active participation of national, state and local government, private sector plantations, and local communities. As a result of the strong stakeholder collaboration, Peatland fires have been reduced by more than 90 per cents and greenhouse gas emissions have also been reduced.

Four actions are recommended for mitigating climate change in tropical peatlands: a) prevent new emissions from land-use change; b) restore degraded peatlands to reduce emissions and enhance sequestration; c) improve management practices to reduce emissions from existing production systems; and d) fire prevention and control.

### Rebuilding Peatland Resilience

Future climate change, with increasing temperature and reduced dry season rainfall, will lead to lower water tables and more fires.



*Before and after photo of restored forest area in Raja Musa Forest Reserve, Malaysia*

Therefore, the main climate adaptation strategies are similar to mitigation strategies and involve maintenance and enhancement of peatland water levels in natural and utilised peatlands, as well as fire prevention and control. If peatlands are well managed, they can also help to offset other climate impacts, such as saline intrusion and flooding.

The Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas Project has supported measures to enhance the resilience of Beung Kiat Ngong peatlands in Champasak Province, Lao PDR as well as local communities to

climate change. The project used an ecosystem-based adaptation approach, whereby the ability of the peatlands to buffer local peoples' livelihoods against climate change impacts has been safeguarded through a combination of improved planning and governance conditions, direct investments in climate change adaptation measures and livelihoods strengthening, and support to climate change resilient forms of sustainable use.

### Way forward

Peatlands play a pivotal role in regulating climate change. Protection and restoration of peatlands can reduce emissions and enhance resilience to future climate change. An integrated approach is imperative to link protection and sustainable use, and to enhance peatland ecosystem services. Member States must be united to work towards incorporating peatland conservation strategy in national policies and plans, encouraging a multi-stakeholder and integrated approach to peatland management, and allocating appropriate resources to effectively execute the APMS and subsequent national plans to lower the potential risks from disaster and economic loss resulted from peatland degradation and climate change. ■

*The Global Environment Centre is a Malaysian NGO with expertise on peatland management and climate change. It has been appointed by the ASEAN Member States as the Technical and Operational Support Partner for the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy 2006-2020*

### References:

- Lo, J. and Parish, F. (2013) *Peatlands and Climate Change in Southeast Asia*. ASEAN Peatland Forests Project and SEApeat Project. ASEAN Secretariat and Global Environment Centre
- Government Regulation on Protection and Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Indonesia (PP57/2016) <http://pkgppkl.menlhk.go.id/v0/en/pp-nomor-57-tahun-2016-tentang-perubahan-ppe-gambut/>
- Badan Restorasi Gambut, Indonesia. <https://brg.go.id/>



Link 2



Link 3

### Additional Resources:



<http://haze.asean.org/2019/08/asean-agreement-on-transboundary-haze-pollution-reprint-2019/>



[http://haze.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Roadmap-ASEAN-Haze-Free\\_adoptedbyCOP12.pdf](http://haze.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Roadmap-ASEAN-Haze-Free_adoptedbyCOP12.pdf)



<http://haze.asean.org/2016/01/asean-guidelines-on-peatland-fire-management/>



# CURBING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THROUGH CARBON MARKETS: PROSPECTS FOR ASEAN



**BY TAMAI AKIHIRO**

SENIOR RESEARCHER, OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION CENTER, JAPAN

**The word “carbon market” may sound curious and new. Many countries see it as a promising mechanism to minimise greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**

I would like to briefly introduce how carbon markets work and discuss the conditions necessary for ASEAN countries to succeed if they opt for this strategy.

A carbon market is an instrument that creates economic incentives for entities to choose more energy-efficient methods and activities and reduce GHG emissions. First, the market administrator sets the limit for GHG emissions amount from all the entities. A quota is then allocated to each entity. If an entity wants to conduct more economic activities with more GHG emissions (e.g. by using more fossil fuel energy) than the allotted quota, it may consider the following options: (i) invest in higher energy efficiency options; (ii) purchase additional quota from another entity that has some leeway; or (iii) give up further earnings because the quota is more expensive.

In this market, selling and buying a quota can be viewed as an investment for effective emitters and an additional burden for polluters at the same time. What is significant about carbon markets is that the price for emission, investment destination, and choice of approach for emissions reduction (e.g. low carbon/decarbonising technologies) can be decided by each player following market mechanisms. Governments do not have to prepare a plan for each entity. That is why this instrument is believed to provide optimum conditions to

achieve the abovementioned GHG emission target. Each player can predict, more or less, the additional cost for each option if it exceeds the quota. Thus, theoretically, the cost equals the negative externality arising from the amount of GHG emissions, or additional damage that would have been caused by the emission.

Traditionally, the reduction of GHG emissions (mitigation) in developing countries was implemented on a per-project basis predominantly led by the government with international support. However, a shift in approach is needed to make mitigation activities economy-wide in order to achieve the global below-2°C goal under the Paris Agreement.



Under a carbon market, the private sector plays a central role in terms of actual emissions reduction. They are the implementers of emissions reduction activities, the finance source, and the investors. The main role of the government is to catalyse actions of the private sector by developing and maintaining the framework.

Opportunities for the private sector are also foreseen. Recent trends show that global investment, supply chains, and end-users are seeking to engage more with green companies and suppliers to expand their activities. Hence, a good performance in a carbon market is critical, as it adds to a company's appeal.

There are some challenges to trading in carbon markets. A typical example is that carbon markets are sometimes inadequately designed for effective GHG reduction. An excessive quota allocation is no more than easy money for the entity. This is referred





“ .....

**Under a carbon market, the private sector plays a central role in terms of actual emissions reduction. They are the implementers of emissions reduction activities, the finance source, and the investors. The main role of the government is to catalyse actions of the private sector by developing and maintaining the framework.**

to as as “hot air.” In this regard, a market should be framed to deliver net emission reduction, with a clear policy direction.

Also, a sound carbon market needs to be supported by technical guidelines and registry infrastructure which will ensure the robustness of GHG emissions reduction achievements and the transparency of credit transactions among market participants. Since credibility is a prerequisite for successful carbon markets, it is crucial for policymakers to create such an enabling environment, taking into account past international practices.

The Tokyo-Emission Trading System (ETS) is considered one of the successful examples of a carbon market. Some keys to success are fair design of the system including appropriate allocation of quota, accurate measurement and reporting system supported by sufficient training to players, and so on. Private sector engagement is a catalyst for many of these issues. To realise a successful carbon market, policymakers should take a step-by-step approach, for elaborating a grand design of the market, considering technical and methodological aspects of rules and guidelines, and communicating with the private sector for their better understanding of the significance of the system and

appropriate ways to prepare for participating in the market.

In the ASEAN region, some countries are already showing interest in designing national carbon markets. Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam are participating in the Partnership for Market Readiness Projects, and Brunei Darussalam indicated a plan to develop carbon markets in the Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy in July 2020. Malaysia and Indonesia are prepared to receive payment from CO<sub>2</sub> recovery in forestry (under the Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation or REDD programme). Singapore designed a carbon tax system that will allow taxpayers to pay by international carbon credits in the future. Significant portion of these efforts are focused on Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) which means monitoring of energy and resource consumption, quantification of GHG emissions, reporting to the government on the MRV system, and checking the submitted accuracy of quantification of GHG emissions. Some existing reporting systems such as for energy, climate change, and other administration purposes are often used as the bases for developing GHG MRV system. Streamlining and enhancing these information flows will create co-benefits for initiating carbon markets that require intensive measurement and accurate data.

ASEAN can take advantage of its intergovernmental cooperation to potentially develop a regional carbon market system similar to the EU-ETS.

The current COVID-19 crisis has made a great impact on the global economy. It cannot be denied that some of climate change countermeasures have taken a backseat to the pandemic response. Unintended GHG emissions are also taking place. But with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change encouraging parties to continue climate actions and raise ambitions through the event, June Momentum, the international motivation to fight against climate change has not slowed down.

With the COVID-19 crisis, now more than ever an innovative and robust way of reducing emissions is highly desired. The carbon market can be an alternative mechanism to accelerate private sector interventions towards a green recovery from COVID-19.

A proper carbon market is an innovative solution to emissions reduction and with an appropriate support of private finance, it can be a multisectoral solution in a post-COVID era and an incentive to create a more resilient society. ■



# CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY IN ASEAN

A policy response to ensure food security in the region



**BY PHAM QUANG MINH, PhD**

HEAD, FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY DIVISION  
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**ASEAN is taking steps to ensure food security in the context of climate change, which is threatening the food systems in four dimensions of food accessibility, food availability, food stability, and food utilisation.**

More than 50 percent of Viet Nam's rice is produced in the Mekong River Delta (or *Đồng bằng sông Cửu Long*), providing livelihood to millions of Vietnamese farmers and their families and contributing to global rice requirements. But natural disasters brought about by climate change have severely impacted agricultural production in Mekong—salinity intrusion and drought have plagued coastal provinces, while heavy rains have inundated provinces located up-stream.

The situation in Mekong echoes the predicament of many other communities in the region. Southeast Asia is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions, largely due to its long coastlines, and the high concentration of population and major economic activities along coastal areas and bodies of water.

Average temperatures in Southeast Asia have risen every decade since 1960 based on the Global Climatic Risk Index compiled by Germanwatch. Higher temperature has resulted in floods, droughts, storms, and other types of extreme and erratic weather. Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam are among the 10 countries in the world most affected by climate change over the past 20 years (Prakash, 2018).

According to the UN Committee on World Food Security, climate change and food insecurity are two intertwined major global challenges that humanity is facing—with climate change as one of the greatest challenges to food security. In ASEAN, climate change, particularly changes in rainfall regime and temperature, has disrupted food and agricultural production in many ways. Food and agriculture are among the more vulnerable sectors in the region in terms of threats associated with climate change. But they also offer great potential for guaranteeing food security and contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an added uncertainty and other challenges to ensure food security, and at the same time, address the impact of climate change.

## **ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security**

At the 14th ASEAN Summit in 2009, the ASEAN Leaders committed to strengthen food security through the issuance of the **Statement on Food Security in the ASEAN Region**. As a result, the **ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and the Strategic Plan of**



## **Food Security**

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” This widely accepted definition points to the following interrelated dimensions of food security:

- **Food availability:** The availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production and/or imports (including food aid).
- **Food accessibility:** Access by individuals to adequate resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.
- **Utilisation:** Utilisation of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation, and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life are met.
- **Stability:** Accessibility of adequate food at all times, including in times of sudden shocks (e.g. an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity).



**Action on Food Security (SPA-FS) in the ASEAN Region 2009-2013** was adopted to “provide scope and joint pragmatic approaches for cooperation in addressing food security in the region.”

Subsequently, the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF), in November 2009, endorsed the **ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC)**, which covers agriculture, fisheries, livestock, forestry, and other relevant sectors such as environment, health, and energy. The AFCC was the response of ASEAN Member States to the realisation that Southeast Asia is among the regions at-risk from climate change since its population relies heavily on agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and other natural resources. Since then, a number of activities, projects and programmes have been conducted at the national and regional levels to increase resilience of food and agricultural systems to climate change.

To support the implementation of the AFCC's Component 4 (*Developing a more comprehensive multi-sectoral strategic framework and a roadmap for*

“ .....  
**An ASEAN Ad-hoc Steering Committee on Climate Change and Food Security has been established to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy and roadmap through mutual learning process on climate change and food security.**

*implementation*), the **ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework for Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food and Nutrition Security and Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals** was adopted by the AMAF in 2018 to promote regional cooperation on matters related to food security and climate change. Various strategic actions have been proposed to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change on food security such as: (i) advancing integrated climate change mitigation and adaptation responses through landscape approaches to safeguard food and nutrition security, and (ii) initiating and sustaining comprehensive capacity development of local, national, and regional institutions to achieve food and nutrition security in the context of climate change.

As the impacts of climate change are affecting all sectors, close cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination are crucial when planning and implementing climate change responses. An ASEAN Ad-hoc Steering Committee on Climate Change and Food Security has been established to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy and roadmap through mutual learning process on climate change and food security.

#### **Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry 2016-2025**

Considering that the natural resource base of food, agriculture, and forestry industries in ASEAN is threatened by a range of internal factors, such as deforestation, soil erosion, and



degradation of watersheds, and by external factors, particularly by the effects of climate change, the **Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (SP-FAF) 2016-2025** was adopted by the AMAF in 2015 to provide a platform for ASEAN to strengthen mechanisms, and develop capabilities to prevent and reduce losses due to disasters and emergencies through concerted national efforts and intensified regional and international cooperation. Various action programmes have been proposed such as: (i) increasing investment in research and development (R&D) in the areas of technologies and management systems with a focus on resilience to facilitate climate smart agriculture, land use, and fishery in cooperation; and (ii) promoting good agriculture practices to minimise the negative effects on natural resources. These action programmes will further strengthen food security arrangement in the region.

#### **ASEAN Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security in the ASEAN Region 2021-2025**

A new **AIFS Framework and SPA-FS in the ASEAN Region** has been developed to continue ensuring long-term food security and nutrition, and to improve the livelihoods of farmers in the ASEAN. The AIFS Framework identifies a number of policy responses in ensuring food security, which include, among others: (i) increasing sustainable agricultural production and productivity, and (ii) enhancing resilience to climate change. Accordingly, ASEAN plans to focus on the implementation of the **2017 ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Food Security and Nutrition Policy**, which serve as the general framework for ASEAN Member States to introduce, implement, and develop food security and nutrition policies, as well as the **2018 ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry** to bring positive outcomes for food security through effective implementation of Guideline 7 to increase resilience to, and contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, natural disasters, and other shocks.

### **Major accomplishments of the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security**

- Twenty-eight projects were undertaken that contributed to the social forestry goals of mitigating the impacts of climate change in ASEAN.
- ASEAN Member States take active leadership in addressing climate change issues and take the lead in knowledge creation and sharing, capacity development, and social forestry implementation.
- Thematic issues relating to locally appropriated adaptation and mitigation actions identified through multi-



stakeholder process were investigated, analysed, and addressed.

- A coordinated social forestry policy framework was developed, integrated and mainstreamed into ASEAN and the national forest and climate change strategies of the ASEAN Member States.
- The ASEAN Guidelines for Agroforestry Development was endorsed to promote the role of agroforestry in simultaneously achieving economic, environmental and social outcomes in ASEAN.



#### **2020 Statement of AMAF in Response to the Outbreak of COVID-19 to Ensure Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition in ASEAN**

In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has adversely impacted the food systems, the **Statement of AMAF in Response to the Outbreak of COVID-19 to Ensure Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition in ASEAN** was released on 15 April 2020 to ensure sustainable supply of sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious foods that meet the dietary requirements of ASEAN populations. The ASEAN Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to implement the **2015 Statement of ASEAN Ministers on AMAF** to improve storage, preservation, transport, and distribution technologies and infrastructure to reduce food insecurity, food nutrient loss and waste. Necessary measures and programmes

at the regional and national levels that meet the immediate food needs of ASEAN populations will be considered to increase food production and ensure food security in the region.

It is important to emphasise that ASEAN's governments cannot ensure food security in the context of climate change and the spread of COVID-19 alone. All stakeholders and partners from different economic sectors, including farmers, producers, processors, traders, scientists and consumers need to be involved in the process of addressing the adverse impacts of climate change and the pandemic to ensure food security so as to achieve sustainable development goals of zero hunger (Goal 2) and climate action (Goal 13). ■

# WHY IS 1.5°C IMPORTANT?

A 1.5°C world will still experience serious climate impacts but scientists say these will be less devastating than higher levels of global warming.

- 2019 was the second hottest year on record. The global average temperature in 2019 was 1.1°C above the pre-industrial period.
- A 1.1°C increase causes increased frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events from heatwaves, droughts, flooding, cyclones and wildfires.
- In the legally-binding Paris Agreement of 2015, nations agreed to limit the global temperature rise to not more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels and cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
- The total annual global greenhouse gas emissions reached its highest levels in 2018 and it has not peaked.
- To prevent warming beyond 1.5°C, the world needs to cut emissions by **7.6%** every year.
- Countries are not on track to meet this commitment and emissions are expected to reach 56 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030, over double what it should be.
- The Emissions Gap Reports conclude that a continuation of current policies would lead to a global mean temperature rise of between **3.4°C** and **3.7°C** by 2100 relative to pre-industrial levels.

Sources:  
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, World Meteorological Organization, Emission Gap Report 2019, UN Environment Programme



## Every Fraction Counts

1.5°C ..... 2°C

Over **70%** of coral reefs will die



Over **99%** of all reefs will be lost

Insects vital for pollination of crops and plants are likely to lose their habitat



This loss of habitat will be almost doubled

The Arctic Ocean will be completely bare of sea ice during the summer, once per century



This likelihood leaps to once a decade

Over 6 million living in coastal areas will be vulnerable to rising sea levels



Sea-level rise will affect **10** more million people at the end of this century

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



## CO2 Emissions, Temperature Changes in Southeast Asia

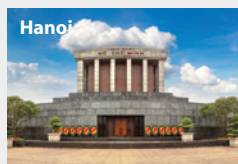
### Average Yearly Temperatures in ASEAN Cities: Then and Now



**Bangkok**  
1840: 26.6 °C | 2019: 28.8 °C



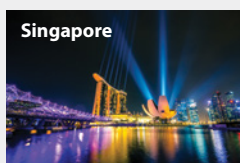
**Yangon**  
1840: 26.1 °C | 2019: 27.9 °C



**Hanoi**  
1843: 21.7 °C | 2019: 24.1 °C



**Manila**  
1845: 25.6 °C | 2019: 27.8 °C



**Singapore**  
1840: 25.8 °C | 2019: 28 °C



**Jakarta**  
1839: 25.8 °C | 2019: 28.1 °C



**Phnom Penh**  
1840: 26.6 °C | 2019: 28.7 °C



**Kuala Lumpur**  
1840: 26.1 °C | 2019: 28.3 °C



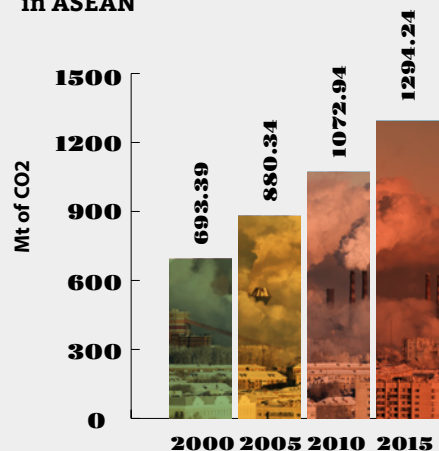
**Vientiane**  
1840: 23.6 °C | 2019: 25.9 °C

**Note:**  
No data for Bandar Seri Begawan



**Source: Berkeley Earth**  
(<http://berkeleyearth.lbl.gov/state-list/>)

### Total Carbon Emissions in ASEAN



**Note:** CO2 emissions from fuel combustion only



**Source: International Energy Agency Data Services**  
(<https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics?country=MASEAN&fuel=CO2%20emissions&indicator=Total%20CO2%20emissions>)

### Climate Change Impact on Southeast Asia



Reliance on agriculture and natural resources



Concentration of population and economic activity along coastlines



4.8 °C rise in mean annual temperature



**Source: ASEAN Cooperation on Climate Change**  
(<https://environment.asean.org/asean-working-group-on-climate-change/>)



70 cm rise in mean sea level by 2100 in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam



Massive resettlement of population



Decline of up to 50% of rice yield potential by 2100



Loss of 6.7% of combined GDP each year by 2100



Strengthen commitment to shift economies to a path of decarbonisation



Accelerate the use of renewable energy sources such as solar energy and wind energy, and decrease fossil fuel dependency



Use efficient appliances, efficient passenger cars



Carry out afforestation and stop deforestation

**THESE AREAS PRESENT A COMBINED POTENTIAL EMISSION REDUCTION OF UP TO 21 GTCO2 PER YEAR BY 2030, WHICH IS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO GET ON A PATHWAY TO WELL BELOW 2°C**



**Source: Lessons from a Decade of Emissions Gap Assessments, UN Environment Programme and IPCC**  
(<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30022/EGR10.pdf>)

## Youth and Environmental Actions: **NARRATIVES FROM ASEAN**



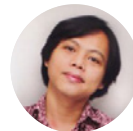
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**“How dare you? You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words,” were the pointed words of young Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg to world leaders at the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York.**

Thunberg demanded immediate action to ensure sustainable climate for future generations. She has gained massive international recognition for her dedication to protecting the environment and her sense of humanity.

Thunberg’s message has resonated among the youth around the world, including in the ASEAN region.

Numerous studies show that Southeast Asia is one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change and its negative impacts on food security, human health, economic growth, and overall sustainability of the region. Like Greta Thunberg, many ASEAN youth have taken serious action and participated actively in climate change initiatives. Using their voices, ASEAN youth have been actively advocating for bolder action to address environmental issues including climate change in ASEAN.

Born in Myanmar, a country ranked among the top three most affected by climate change in the last two decades by Climate Risk Index 2019, Kyaw Ye Htet co-founded Strike for Climate Myanmar and helped initiate Fridays for Future Myanmar. Both are youth movements campaigning to raise awareness on the ongoing crisis of climate change and advocating legislation for climate action. Marinel Sumook Ubaldo,

a survivor of Typhoon Haiyan which is considered one of the most economically damaging climate-related disasters in the last 45 years, is a youth global advocate from the Philippines, calling for reduction of carbon emissions and investment in renewable energy. In 2015, she spoke at the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference where she said “please think about us, think about the coming generations who will suffer because you did not make decisions in time”.

There are currently 213 million young people between the ages of 15 and 34 in ASEAN countries, and the figure is expected to increase to just over 220 million in 2038. Accounting for 30 per cent of the total population in the region today, the youth are an important segment of the population as the young are the leaders of tomorrow and strong catalysts not only for economic, social, and cultural development, but also for a change towards greener and better future.

The significant role of youth in environmental action has been recognised by the ASEAN Member States. ASEAN Leaders declared November 25 as the ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day. This strongly affirms ASEAN’s commitment to encourage each Member State to



conduct activities and provide a platform for local and regional collaboration among ASEAN youth toward climate actions. Under this framework, ASEAN’s young people gathered for the first commemoration of the ASEAN Youth in Climate Action and Disaster Resilience Day in the Philippines on 23-25 November 2018. At the event, youth representatives learned about a and shared their views on climate change issues and best climate action practices; and even performed a simulation of the annual sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to gain a greater appreciation for global discourse and diplomacy on climate change issues.

Youth and climate change are among the priorities of the ASEAN Working Group on Environmental Education, which was established to promote environmental protection through



effective environmental education and awareness raising programmes. The working group's main venture is to enhance capacity of ASEAN youth and societies to adapt and respond to current and emerging environmental challenges, including climate change, so as to create a dynamic, sustainable, and resilient ASEAN Community. Initiated by the working group, the **ASEAN Youth Environment Forum** has been held regularly since 2007. It aims to promote awareness and enhance youth's participation in environmental protection. Through the forum, the ASEAN youth have initiated the ASEAN Youth Environment Network on social media, enabling them to continue exchanges in knowledge and experiences.

In 2019, as part of the working group's Action Plan, ASEAN also conferred the first **ASEAN Youth Eco-Champions Award** to recognise exceptional young people from each Member State who have made outstanding contributions in the protection of the region's environment.

Through the ASEAN Youth Eco-Champions Award, youth leadership in a wide range of environmental issues, relevant to climate change, have been acknowledged and well documented. These include the organisation of the Camp Student's Environmental Writing Initiative by youth in the Philippines. The camp was founded on the belief that young journalists have the distinctive ability and responsibility to further climate actions through story-telling. Moreover, ASEAN youth leadership on climate actions is also reflected through the establishment of the Thailand Climate CoLab, an environmentally-concerned youth-led project aiming to combat the negative threats of climate change at the community level. It focuses on solving water pollution, waste management, and harnessing green energy in communities in Thailand.

Zacky Irwandi, one of the recipients of the ASEAN Youth Eco-Champions Award from Indonesia, believes that the work of Member States in empowering youth in environmental action is one of the enabling factors for broadening youth's participation in addressing various issues on the environment. Through the Daur Bunga (Flower Cycle) initiative, he played



#### Top

*Daur Bunga*

#### Bottom

*The First ASEAN Youth Eco-Champions Award*

a part in helping reduce the amount of organic waste, generated particularly from decorated flowers, by recycling it into useful public decors. These creative and innovative measures were acknowledged by ASEAN and have inspired other young people to contribute to efforts to decrease greenhouse gas emissions (especially methane) from the decomposition of organic matters. Irwandi strongly believes that the youth are the most active members in society who are receptive to new ideas for positive changes. "Youths are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but already play a key role through diverse initiatives to advocate social and environmental change," Irwandi explained.

Aside from the above activities, ASEAN has also created several platforms for ASEAN youth to gather and explore potential environmental movements, including through the **ASEAN Youth Conference, Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, ASEAN Youth Forum**, and the commemorative event of the ASEAN Environment Day. At the ASEAN

Environment Day in 2019, the youth participants took on a remarkably strategic direction to enhance their commitment towards environmental protection by issuing the ASEAN Youth Joint Pledge of Eco-Schools and Youth Eco-Champions. The pledge was conveyed to the ASEAN Ministers on Environment and Secretary-General of ASEAN, stating that the young are committed to support one another in creating a sustainable society in the region through promoting a culture of innovation and productivity among youth to drive impactful solutions for sustainable future.

By speaking up and taking action, the ASEAN youth have demonstrated remarkable capacity to drive a positive change for the environment and the climate. Moving forward, there is so much more that ASEAN's young generation can offer towards the achievement of a sustainable future, for Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. While even an individual can make a significant change, a coordinated and enhanced youth-led action across the region, complemented by stronger support from ASEAN and partners, will arguably lead to more impactful change at a greater scale. Strengthening and enhancing environmental protection efforts of the 30 per cent of the region's total population—the ASEAN youth—is paramount to significantly accelerating the attainment of ASEAN's vision of a resilient community with enhanced capacity and capability to adapt and respond to disasters and climate change, among others.

Recognised as one of the world's CNN Heroes Young Wonders (2018), Melati Wijsen, teenage co-founders of Bye Bye Plastic Bags campaign in Bali and Youthtopia that hosts on-the-ground local workshops and training for young changemakers, believe that the young may only be "25% of the world's population, but we are 100% the future." It is essential for ASEAN, together with its partners, to not only listen to the youth voice in decision making processes, but also to empower them and tap into their potential—for advocacy, action, leadership—to act for their greener and better future. ■





# Conversations

Is this the planet we want for our younger generations?

On why climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution need urgent solutions today.





# Lin Ji Liaw

## Biologist and Biodiversity Conservationist

Photo Credit: © Lin Ji Liaw

**In 2013, conservationist Lin Ji Liaw founded the Biodiversity and Natural History Society (BruWILD), a non-governmental organisation working towards the conservation and preservation of Brunei Darussalam's biodiversity.**

Thirty-one-year-old Liaw is the country manager of DHI Brunei, an environmental consultancy company that works on environmental impact assessment, environment management and monitoring and strategic environmental assessment projects in the region. Liaw, currently pursuing her master's degree in biodiversity, wildlife and ecosystem health at the University of Edinburgh, was awarded the 1st ASEAN Youth Eco-Champions (Senior Category) in 2019, for her advocacy work in biodiversity protection.

### IN HER OWN WORDS:

"Since I was a little girl, I always had this great affinity to the forest. To make a difference, I needed to learn more about it, scientifically; it was not just about liking it. Rachel Carson, Jane Goodall, and E.O Wilson are key people who have motivated me through their conservation works. After I graduated, I remember having coffee in my university with a couple of my team members, talking about how to bring the concept of conservation to the public, to convert technical words to engage kids, parents, and teachers because every time we talk about biodiversity conservation, it's always to people who are already on the same boat, like researchers and lecturers. The next thing we knew, we had BruWILD.

"We have three main projects on education, marine, and rescue. The best one is on the education front because it's easier to execute, as we started BruWILD with that approach. Rescue is not for everybody; you need to have the right skills for it. I remember spending long nights writing proposals to win grants to set up a rescue hotline, the first one in Brunei, and to bring in the experts from the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council to Brunei to train 30 of us. If people find injured animals, they don't know whom to call. We also receive reports about illegal trade online, we will then report this to the authorities. The last part is to have a facility, but this takes a lot of money and resources. Right now, we've been in contact with the local wildlife division. We did not rescue a lot of wildlife; maybe in some way it's good, because that indicates the loss of wildlife due to traffic accidents is also low.



*Lin Ji Liaw has set up BruWILD to promote biodiversity conservation to the public*

"BruWILD has not led a climate change project, but we are working with the Brunei Darussalam Climate Change Secretariat in their workshops and participating in many of their projects. We're trying not to reinvent the wheel, but to enforce it. Brunei is quite small in terms of population. If you have too many programmes, it's hard for them to connect, and you can get contradicting messages. We would rather support each other so that we talk the same language.

"In Brunei, the impact on climate change has been quantified in several layers. There's more to understand about how much emissions the country is actually producing, and at the same time the Secretariat also tries to sort of map out how much is being

sequestered. But you can already see certain signs; more frequent flooding and the flood impact is higher, and we have forest fires. In Brunei, the peat swamp area is also facing yearly or sometimes twice a year of forest fires. The frequency and the intensity have been increased, but by how much, that has to be properly quantified.

"I think, the public understanding of climate change has increased dramatically, I could say since the inception of the Secretariat. People can help too. The least they can do is start from home. For example, if you don't need to use the air conditioner, just turn it off or you don't have to make it so cold like in winter.

"Southeast Asia still has good, intact forests but forest fires are everywhere. My wish is that ASEAN can become the role model, the champion for protecting old forests. Can you imagine if we lose them? It would be such a huge loss. It must be now more than ever, for us to protect what we have left.

"Protecting the environment is tough. I still think that to tackle threats to the environment, we would have to tackle them on many fronts, not just climate change per se. It's about communicating with different stakeholders who speak different languages. Right now, I'm still struggling, and today I can say that I meet more people than trees. I miss nature, I miss investigating and understanding nature, because that was how I started. Every day you go out in the same project area, but every day nature surprises you." ■

*Interviewed by Novia D. Rulistia*



# Khairun Nisa Zabidi

## Climate Change Action Advocate

**Khairun Nisa Zabidi leads the UK's International Climate Fund (ICF) in Malaysia via the UK Partnerships for Accelerated Climate Transitions (UK-PACT) programme.**

**As a young climate change activist, Khairun lobbied at the UNFCCC negotiations, and later founded an equal opportunity zero-waste social enterprise. She has over 12 years of experience in corporate social responsibility, sustainability reporting and standards, as well as capacity building for the mitigation and adaptation of climate change for the private, public and third sectors.**

**Khairun now manages a program called "The Partnership for Accelerated Climate Transition" which is part of the UK government's commitment to support developing countries decarbonise.**

### IN HER OWN WORDS:

"I manage a 2.5 million-pound fund which is technical assistance and it's meant to be the money lent by the government to the private sector, third sector. Civil societies tell us what is needed. We're talking to big banks, we're talking to governments, we're talking to leaders who are passionate and want to create change. But it's like asking them to go into a shop they've never been into and asking them to buy something they don't know they need.

"In ASEAN, we are generally, as a people, as a community, have a high level of respect for each other. We need a little bit of help. We traditionally have always been supply led rather than demand led. How do we meet in the middle, for organisations or governments that are prepared to—or who have led the way or essentially have found those solutions that worked for their people?

"We need to be much more focused on adaptation.

We look at how our cities, our economies, and our countries will be affected by the physical risks of climate change. We'll also be looking at transition risks. Things like coal generation. If we devolve from it, if we say that we will no longer fund that, what



*Khairun says investing in social capital can help the region adapt to the impacts of climate change*

are the implications to the economy, so that's a transition risk there.

"I'm around the table with CEOs and board members, and I'm often the only woman and it isn't just I'm often the youngest. One of the areas that they're looking at is making sure the supply chains are free from deforestation. We speak about issues like climate change or industries that are a hundred years old that haven't changed, the palm oil industry hasn't changed in a hundred years and they're struggling with labor because young people don't want to work on the estates. If you could revolutionise the agriculture industry or the palm oil industry to attract young people, you need to have younger people around the table. How do we then allow or create an opportunity for young people to be able to sit around

the table with decisionmakers because they have the right to this world as much as any of us do.

"We are our systems, our ecosystems. Our economies aren't designed to allow us to live sustainably and we can't expect those who have caused the problem to fix the problem for us. So, we need to be creative, we need to be able to think about those systems. It's hard work. I am now in positions where I'm talking to big banks, regional banks and I'm telling them, "Look, as long as you're still trading in money, we are not shifting the needle."

"We don't look at it enough from a social perspective.

What does it mean for how we live, how communities grow? Are our children resilient enough to be able to make decisions in a very uncertain future? Are our economies or our supply chains, resilient especially when it comes to things like basic needs like food and security and water, do we have enough resilience to ensure that, if the worst climate changes affect or hit us, will we have the skill sets to be able to survive and thrive? It's inevitable, we can no longer accept that's not happening. How do we prepare for it is the big question." ■

**Interviewed by Mary Kathleen Quiano-Castro**



**Learn more about the UK-PACT in Malaysia and the region**

<https://www.ukpact.co.uk/country-programme/malaysia>





# Rili Djohani

## Coastal Management Specialist and Marine Ecologist

Photo Credit: © Rili Djohani

**Rili Djohani has worked for over 30 years to protect marine ecosystems and coastal areas in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.**

Her journey in marine conservation began in 1989 when she established the World Wide Fund for Nature marine conservation programme in Indonesia. In 1995, she joined The Nature Conservancy and held several positions, including Indonesia country director and marine program director. Djohani, who studied tropical coastal zone management at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK, and tropical marine ecology at the University of Leiden in The Netherlands, was part of the core team that established the multinational Coral Triangle Initiative for Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security.

In 2010, Djohani co-founded Coral Triangle Center (CTC), a learning centre on coastal and marine resources management based in Bali, Indonesia. As CTC's executive director, Djohani works to strengthen local leadership and capacity through an integrated portfolio of marine protected areas (MPA) learning sites, customised training programs and learning networks, and facilitation of public private partnerships in the Coral Triangle, the world's epicenter of marine biodiversity.

### IN HER OWN WORDS:

"There have been many positive changes in marine conservation works in Indonesia now compared to 30 years ago when I just started. More NGOs focusing on marine conservation, people are more aware of this issue, and the government has also started to pay attention to marine conservation with the establishment of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. But today, we face more challenges than before. Previously, the issues were mostly about unsustainable fishing practices, now we also have pollution, sea temperature rise, and ocean acidification, to name a few, that can disrupt the ecosystem and the function of the ocean itself.

"Marine biodiversity has important roles in the ecosystem. Indonesia has extraordinarily rich marine biodiversity due to its location in the Coral Triangle zone, and together with other countries in the Coral Triangle, they need to collaborate to protect this marine biodiversity. To effectively deal with the challenges, capacity building should be the main priority.



*Through the Coral Triangle Center, Rili Djohani prioritises capacity building in her marine conservation efforts*

CTC is established with this vision, focusing on practical training in marine conservation. We have 26 training syllabi, and everyone can participate in our classes, like government officials, diving operators, NGO workers, travellers, and local communities. We also organise field training in Nusa Penida MPAs and Banda Islands MPAs in Indonesia and other countries in the Coral Triangle. We are also working on the establishment of new MPAs in Indonesia and assisting the Indonesian government in reaching its target to set aside 10 per cent of its water to become MPAs by 2030. The progress of our works has been satisfying; the coverage of coral reefs is increasing, and local communities are working effectively together with local administrations to protect their coastal environment and marine ecosystem. The MPA status allows

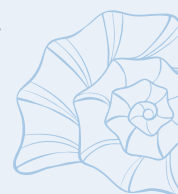
certain areas to get the necessary attention and infrastructure to protect biodiversity. As such, we don't only get ecological benefits, but also social and economic.

"But it's a long process to be where we are now. In Nusa Penida, for example, it took us two years to get the support of 16 villages before we could start the conservation works. At first, local communities rejected us because they felt our presence only limited their livelihood. Then we sat down together, held many rounds of discussions before we got on the same board. Dialogue plays a key role because the voices of local communities and local governments are important in developing conservation areas.

"ASEAN can take a leading role in addressing challenges to our oceans. I wish ASEAN can achieve the target to have protected coastal and marine areas as set by the Convention on Biological Diversity. I know not all ASEAN countries have oceans, but I hope ASEAN can have a network where they can cooperate in promoting sustainable tourism, and monitoring marine protected areas for the future.

"I love being underwater; the marine ecosystem always captivates me, and it feels so peaceful when I'm underwater. This sets a purpose for me to keep our ocean healthy for future generations because the ocean is very important for us. When I get older, I probably will teach or write on marine conservation. I don't want to stop fighting for the ocean." ■

*Interviewed by Novia D. Rulistia*





# Shifting Currents

Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland on how ASEAN can achieve sustainable development, economic and gender equality

ASEAN addresses the economic impact of the COVID-19 and prepares for the region's recovery

Photo Credit: © Ariel Manuel



An Elder's  
Viewpoint:

# Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland



**Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, first woman Prime Minister of Norway, pioneered the concept of sustainable development and shaped its early agenda. She is a founding member of The Elders, the group of independent global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007 who work for peace, justice and human rights.**

**Dr. Brundtland served as Director General of the World Health Organization, UN Special Envoy for Climate Change, and led the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission. Dr. Brundtland shares with *The ASEAN* her views on the COVID-19 pandemic, current-day sustainable development issues, healthcare and women empowerment.**

**How has the concept of “sustainable development,” first initiated under your leadership as chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development, evolved over the past 30 years? Which aspects of sustainable development were successfully addressed by the global community, and the Southeast Asian region in particular, and which aspects require further attention?**

**Brundtland:** Sustainable development is a concept rooted in the principles of equality, justice, and human rights. Although the world has changed immeasurably since the

1980s when the World Commission on Environment and Development undertook its work, these principles remain essential in tackling contemporary challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, economic inequality, and gender oppression.

The international community has recognised the importance of sustainable development by agreeing on the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, and the Paris Agreement on climate change in the same year. These are important achievements, but political leaders now

need to show greater ambition and commitment to ensure their full implementation. More attention needs to be paid to tackling systemic racial and gender discrimination and the intersection between these forms of prejudice and the challenges of poverty reduction and improving public health.

**What particular roles can regional organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) undertake to ensure continuous progress towards sustainable development?**

**Brundtland:** Regional bodies like ASEAN can play a crucial role in ensuring that commitments agreed at a global level can be effectively implemented on the ground. They can help coordinate neighbouring countries' policies regarding cross-border issues such as climate change, migration and trade, providing an inclusive forum where diverse views can be debated and common solutions agreed. Successful multilateralism demands a bottom-up approach as well as a top-down model, and ASEAN and other regional blocs like the EU and Mercosur have a vital role in delivering global progress.

**COVID-19 has demonstrated prevailing vulnerabilities in our present social and economic systems. What are the major priorities that countries need to focus**

**Regional bodies like ASEAN can play a crucial role in ensuring that commitments agreed at a global level can be effectively implemented on the ground. They can help coordinate neighbouring countries' policies regarding cross-border issues such as climate change, migration and trade, providing an inclusive forum where diverse views can be debated and common solutions agreed.**

#### **on rebuilding a better future?**

**Brundtland:** The coronavirus has shone a harsh light on existing inequalities, from the distribution of economic resources to access to health services. It is essential that countries support the WHO and provide it with the necessary funding to carry out its work, including through implementing the recommendations of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board.

The WHO must be enabled to work on behalf of all humanity, acting solely on the best available scientific and medical evidence. It is deeply unhelpful and counter-productive for the WHO to become a forum for political point scoring by member countries in the pursuit of narrow national interests.

The virus will not be overcome unless all nations work together, pooling resources and expertise to strengthen health systems, develop and distribute an effective vaccine, protect health workers, and provide the necessary care to all who need it in society. This must particularly include vulnerable groups such as refugees, migrants, the older persons, and the infirm.

**As a region diverse in terms of human, social, and economic development, ASEAN is working hard towards ensuring that the needs of the vulnerable are being addressed, through policies and programmes. Increasing access to social protection, which includes working towards Universal Health Coverage, is a priority in the region. Is there anything you would like to share that could assist the region in achieving its goals in the area of social protection?**

**Brundtland:** Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is essential to help ASEAN countries



improve their health systems in the face of COVID-19 and possible future pandemics. Some ASEAN countries like Thailand and Malaysia have strong track records on implementing UHC; while others, have a long way to go. If there is one lesson the world has learnt from the current pandemic, it is that you can only reach UHC through public financing.

Furthermore, as WHO has been highlighting recently, countries should remove health service user fees and ensure that everyone can access services free at the point of delivery. Removing financial barriers to health services is particularly important in the midst of a pandemic, especially for disadvantaged groups such as women, children, and older persons.

**Much work is being done in the region to address gender inequality and empower women and girls. We are interested in hearing your views on what you regard as crucial elements in moving towards and maintaining gender equality.**

**Brundtland:** You cannot have sustainable development if women and girls are still subject to exclusion, discrimination, sexual assault, and violence. There are strong arguments for reviewing and reforming institutions and processes, particularly so the multilateral system better reflects the diversity of the human family and gives a voice to women, young people, and other marginalised groups in society. We also need

sustained investment in education so a whole generation of young women and girls are not further marginalised after the pandemic has disrupted their schooling and often plunged their families into poverty.

Gender equality needs to be understood as critical for the progress of the whole of society. This means male political, business, religious and community leaders need to be educated on the values of equality and justice, so they can themselves become supporters of the rights and potential of women and girls.

**Among its various programmes, ASEAN has a programme on Women, Peace, and Security. Is there any advice you can provide for organisations working towards increasing the number of women in leadership roles?**

**Brundtland:** This follows on from the previous point: women have a unique and valuable contribution to furthering peace and security in their countries and regions, and their talents need to be respected and channelled by organisations working in this field. Sometimes this may involve "positive discrimination" to overcome entrenched systems of patriarchal privilege. Sometimes this may involve restructuring organisations and work practices so they are more inclusive towards women. And sometimes this may involve directly confronting and even removing bodies and individuals that are a block towards progress or which seek to undermine anti-discriminatory efforts. The common thread is that women's rights, voices, and experiences must be respected, injustices tackled, and there must be no more impunity for those who abuse, denigrate or deny their status. ■

*Interview facilitated by Kiran Sagoo, PhD.*



## COVID-19 Impact Viewpoint:

### Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for the ASEAN Economic Community

## Dr. Aladdin D. Rillo



**Dr. Aladdin D. Rillo talks to *The ASEAN* about the economic impact of COVID-19 and the development of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework to guide the regional bloc's post-pandemic recovery efforts.**



#### How has ASEAN been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? Who has been affected the most?

**Rillo:** The unprecedented scale of COVID-19 has taken the world by surprise. The pandemic has generated adverse impacts on market confidence, financial markets, the travel sector, supply chains, and other vulnerable sectors—all these contribute to the downward revisions of growth outlook in all ASEAN economies in 2020, albeit at varying degrees. As for 2020, it is now forecasted that the Southeast Asian region's economy will contract by 3.8 per cent, before rebounding to a 5.5 per cent growth in 2021. The majority of ASEAN Member States are expected to experience recession this year, some deeper

than others; the remaining few will see either stagnation or a much more modest growth than that the region has seen in the past.

This pandemic is like no other crises that ASEAN has experienced before, especially given that the decline in productive capacity, output, and employment has been much

larger and faster during the present crisis compared to those that occurred during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and the Global Financial Crisis in 2008. The pandemic has put millions of jobs at risk, while businesses, especially micro-, small and medium enterprises, struggle to stay afloat. At the individual level, low-income and informal workers, and women, are likely to be hit harder, at least partly due to uneven access to social security benefits. The costly spillovers are already evident across sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, such as tourism, aviation, manufacturing, transport and retail. Inevitably, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to harm development prospects, exacerbate inequality, and slow the progress in reducing poverty.

#### How effective do you think are ASEAN responses to date?

**Rillo:** ASEAN has responded early and swiftly to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. ASEAN Member States have moved quickly to ensure macroeconomic stability and financial stability. Most, if not all, have rolled-out various policy measures and stimulus packages to mitigate the damage from the pandemic on the economy, through targeted welfare support for the vulnerable goods, wage subsidies, and others.

**“ASEAN has responded early and swiftly to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. ASEAN Member States have moved quickly to ensure macroeconomic stability and financial stability.”**



Photo Credit: © YuriAbas/Shutterstock

Member States' measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic fall into three broad categories: fiscal stimulus packages; monetary policy and financial measures; and sector-specific measures and interventions. The correct-targeting and effectiveness of these social and economic stimulus packages are vital to sustain economic activities, jobs, and livelihoods over the next few years for the economic recovery. As a region, ASEAN continues to be steadfast in helping one another, and to work collectively in combating the pandemic.

ASEAN Leaders and ministers have, since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak in February, affirmed their commitment to work together to respond to and mitigate the public health crisis and socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Such a spirit is echoed from the highest political level to the different sectors of the ASEAN Community, from health, trade, agriculture, labour to social welfare.

Recognising that a global pandemic cannot be tackled by any country or region alone,

ASEAN has also strengthened its cooperation with dialogue partners in strengthening its health responses and to ensure the continued flow of trade in goods and services, particularly within the region, and especially for essential goods such as food and medical supplies.

On the economic front, ASEAN was committed from the onset of the crisis to keep markets open, ensure the normal flows of trade, and supply chains connected, particularly for essential products. The ASEAN economic ministers, at their Special Meeting on 4 June 2020, adopted the **Ha Noi Plan of Action on Strengthening ASEAN Economic Cooperation and Supply Chain Connectivity in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**, and efforts are now underway for its implementation.

Other key COVID-29 responses include the establishment of the **COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund**, the work towards the establishment of ASEAN regional reserve of medical supplies and the standard operating procedures for ASEAN response

to future public health emergencies; as well as the development of an ASEAN comprehensive recovery framework.

So far, the region has been swift and effective in securing the relevance and contribution of the ASEAN platform to efforts to combat COVID-19. But it is still a long road ahead for recovery. While understandably, the top priority for ASEAN now is to contain the virus, the region's ability to prepare for recovery along the way will determine the effectiveness of its response beyond the short term. This is a very unusual time, and we cannot afford to stay within our comfort zone and some bold measures will be needed.

**As announced by Leaders at the 36th ASEAN Summit, ASEAN is developing an ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework. Why is this necessary and how would the document be useful to the region's recovery?**

**Rillo:** Building back better in post-pandemic recovery is not an easy task. ASEAN needs to strike a right balance



**“The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework will serve as an exit strategy for the region, taking it through the reopening and recovery stages, towards longer-term resilience, preparedness, and competitiveness.”**

between lives and livelihoods, or else risk losing everything. Some Member States have shown initial success in containing the spread of COVID-19, while few others are grappling with the emergence of new outbreaks. While ASEAN is not short of COVID-19 response initiatives from different sectors, the impact of the crisis is expansive and comprehensive. Effective recovery efforts, therefore, require a holistic, comprehensive, and coordinated response.

While it started off as a public health crisis, time has shown that COVID-19 has evolved into an economic crisis. Effective response efforts must therefore go beyond the health sector to also mitigate the impact on and support the economy and livelihood of the people. It requires a committed journey to reform socio-economic systems and the longer term endeavour to embrace the “new normal,” strengthen institutions and streamline regulations as well as enhance participation of all stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, and dialogue partners.

The **ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework** will serve as an exit strategy for the region, taking it through the reopening and recovery stages, towards longer-term resilience, preparedness, and competitiveness.

**What can we expect to see in the framework, and how can the people in ASEAN benefit and contribute?**

**Rillo:** The ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, which will take a whole-of-ASEAN-community approach underlines ASEAN's commitment to pursue post-pandemic recovery that is holistic, pragmatic, durable, long-lasting, and inclusive, giving due consideration to the hardest hit sectors and vulnerable groups,

and capable of putting the region towards a robust and resilient recovery. More specifically, the framework will focus on actionable and impactful measures that will contribute to the enhancement of our health system; strengthen human security; allow the region to maximise the potential of intra-ASEAN market and broader economic integration; accelerate inclusive digitalisation; and pave the way for ASEAN to build back better into a sustainable and resilient future.

Such a framework will address both the immediate fundamentals which will benefit the region and the ASEAN community, e.g. macroeconomic and financial stability, supply chain connectivity, while minimising any long-term impact on productivity by enhancing preparedness to rebuild the economy in the aftermath of the pandemic. Furthermore, ASEAN recognises the important role its stakeholders can play and contribute in the recovery of the region and the framework. As such, ASEAN will pursue active and constructive engagement with the region's private sector, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders. ASEAN will need all stakeholders including the private sector, academe, and civil society to engage actively and effectively, identify concrete recommendations, and provide feedback on the outcomes of ASEAN integration on the ground.

Apart from disseminating relevant information concerning ASEAN's initiatives to various communities across the region, as well as providing the latest on-the-ground information to support informed policymaking at both national and regional levels, ASEAN stakeholders will also play a key role in the implementation of the recovery framework and its implementation plan.

**What lessons have been learned from this crisis and how can ASEAN be better prepared for future risks and vulnerabilities? What needs to be changed or improved?**

**Rillo:** The pandemic crisis has highlighted that such health and economic shocks have little regard to national borders given the interconnectedness and interlinkages of economies and society. As the region looks forward to the post-pandemic future, it is important for ASEAN to plan carefully for the post-recovery. Thus, this recovery period is an opportunity for ASEAN to examine common challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic, assess economic implications, and discuss possible solutions to facilitate recovery. Furthermore, the pandemic has also exposed longer-term vulnerabilities to be addressed in the region, namely large informal sectors, inadequate social protection, deficient health sector capacity, and lack of established mechanisms for emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also shown that cooperation is more important now more than ever in the face of a global crisis. ASEAN needs to strengthen regional collective resilience which will be integral to containment efforts and to safeguarding socio-economic stability, employment and livelihoods. Cooperation and stakeholder engagement have proven vital for a more resilient and inclusive ASEAN, requiring collaborations and a participatory approach to expand opportunities for all segments of society, particularly the vulnerable groups, and highlighting that the post-pandemic should not be business as usual.

The crisis has provided the momentum for digital transformation. Digital technologies allowed us to stay connected and continue learning. They also supported businesses and will underpin the region's future growth potential. At the same time, the rethinking of a post-COVID-19 world yielded an opportunity for ASEAN to re-examine our approaches and realign our growth path to one that is more sustainable and resilient. Last but not least, the crisis has meant that now more than ever, the stakeholders expect ASEAN to deliver concrete benefits for the people. This pandemic is an opportunity for ASEAN to rebuild towards a stronger, more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future. ■

# A SMART VILLAGE APPROACH IN INDONESIA

## Opportunities for Rural Advancement

BY DR. (H.C) A. HALIM ISKANDAR, S.PD., M.PD

INDONESIA MINISTER OF VILLAGES, DEVELOPMENT OF DISADVANTAGED REGIONS AND TRANSMIGRATION

**Minister A. Halim Iskandar shares his views on how implementing the UN Smart Village Approach in Indonesia will propel rural development, and help the country meet its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all the members of the United Nations in 2015, include 17 Sustainable Development Goals that focus on improving the quality of life for all. The SDGs and their targets acknowledge that the eradication of poverty and other deficiencies must align with strategies to improve health and education, reduce inequality, and drive economic growth. As a member of the United Nations, Indonesia is committed to meeting the SDGs 2030 global target.

According to the 2019 World Bank report, almost half of Indonesia's total population of 267.7 million reside in rural areas. The country's rural population is spread over

74,953 villages, based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration (Kemendesa, 2019). The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that poverty is mainly concentrated in rural areas.

Current statistics emphasise that revitalising rural communities is critical in meeting the SDGs. This can be done through digital transformation. However, the high cost of installation of information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure; lack of internet connectivity and access to electricity; deficiency in digital skills, and illiteracy are the main challenges to spurring this transformation in rural areas. A smarter approach to managing the complexities,

reducing expenses, increasing efficiency, and improving the quality of life in rural areas is needed. Hence, the implementation of the smart village approach, as recommended by the UN, seems promising.

### Smart Village Concept: Localising the SDGs to the villages

Smart village is a comprehensive, cost-efficient, collaborative, and sustainable approach that is designed to accelerate the real impact of SDGs for people in rural villages through an integrated development and technology platform model. It is founded on a strong commitment of the government of Indonesia and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to improve people's lives through innovation and the utilisation of ICT solutions. The implementation is in the areas of access to e-health and other basic services, innovative solutions for environmental concerns, e-literacy skills, circular economy application to agricultural waste, smart specialisation agro-food projects, tourism and cultural activities, promotion of local products, and others.

The concept of smart village does not propose a one-size-fits-all solution. Its strategies respond to the challenges and needs of the villages' territories by building on their local strengths and assets. Technology must act as tools of development, bringing

### Characteristics of Indonesia's Rural Communities

**Workforce in rural areas have an elementary education at most.**

**Unemployment rate in rural areas is high at 14.2 million in 2013.**

**Poverty rate is 13.2% in 2017, almost double the 7% poverty rate in urban areas for the same period.**





Traditional design and implementation	Smart design and implementation
Top-down, hierarchical structures, management and decision-making	Distributed, networked management structures and decision-making
Every sector and ministry work in silos leveraging fragmented technologies	Integration of sectors to focus on citizen experience leveraging innovative technologies
Rigid and rule-bound	Flexible and adaptable to change
Many layers of management and decision-making	Streamlined decision-making
Stakeholders working on their own to achieve narrow goals	Multi-stakeholder integration, collaboration and collective action towards shared goals
Handling issues one by one	A holistic view involving different dimensions of sustainability
Duplication on investments and infrastructure among different ministries and projects	Shared and re-used infrastructure investment
<b>Source: ITU Publications, 2020: Traditional vs Smart Design Implementation</b>	

education and local business opportunities to rural areas, improving the health and welfare of villagers, as well as increasing their democratic involvement towards a better quality of life. Through this model, governments can aim at increasing the efficiency, security and effectiveness of public services while reducing their cost, promoting transparency and good governance, enhancing traceability of transactions, and data exchanges, among others.

In general, the smart village approach aims to ensure that: i) rural dwellers have access to network infrastructure via connected devices; ii) citizens can access impactful and transformational SDG-related digital services, as they need them, on time, anywhere and all the time; iii) services are customised for the specific SDG needs of citizens; iv) integrated SDG-related services are continuously improving and adapting to changes; and v) partner organisations involved are continuously learning and adapting their services. Based on Indonesia's experience, the Smart Villages approach stands as a viable solution to eliminating the barriers that have so far impeded the implementation and the scale-up of initiatives for ICT-enabled development.

### Why a "Smart" Approach?

The ITU argues that traditional approaches have failed to manage complexities in rural areas and therefore, a smarter approach is urgently needed. The ITU also believes that exploring the potential to catalyse social and economic change in rural villages through inclusive digital transformation

can help as a crucial enabler for rural development and potentially reduce rural-urban migration and rural poverty. Inclusive digital transformation refers to utilisation of digital technology to support social change that has a beneficial impact on society.

### Village Fund and Smart Village Implementation

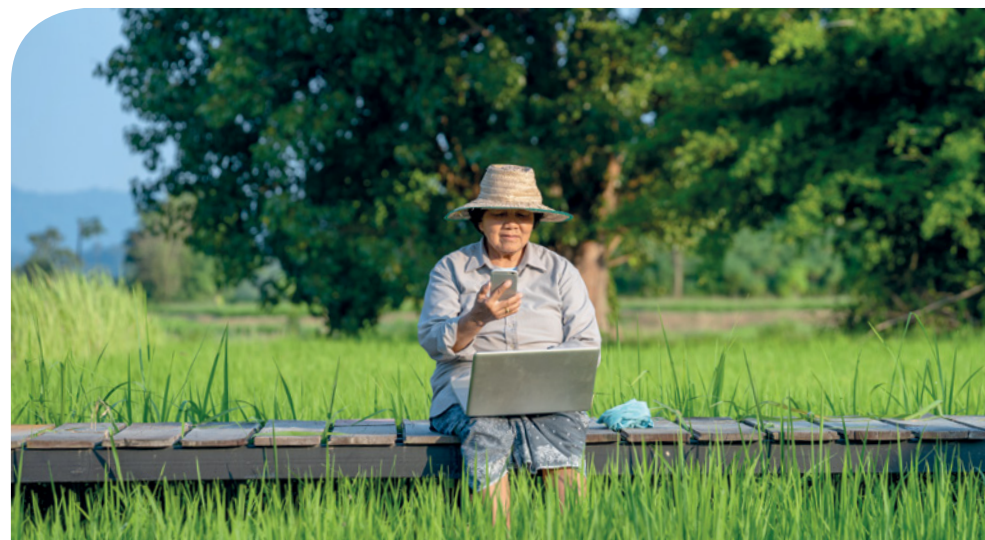
For the past five years, the Indonesian Government has disbursed more than 329.65 trillion Indonesian rupiah or about 22.2 million US dollars to support rural development through village funds. The disbursement is based on a 2014 law that stipulates assistance for village-level administrations to finance development; strengthen community empowerment; launch other social activities to improve social welfare services; and support a more equitable local economy. The law grants autonomy for villages to determine the use of the funding for modernisation

plans that are specific to the needs of their communities and territories. The village funds, however, have so far been largely used for infrastructure development.

There are considerable successes in the implementation of the village fund scheme from 2014 to 2019. As early as 2018, data from the National Statistics Agency show that village open unemployment rates declined 1.21 per cent from 3.72 per cent and that there was an increase in employment opportunities. The number of self-reliant villages has doubled, from 2,894 villages to 5,559 villages; the number of underdeveloped villages has decreased by 30 per cent; and consequently contributed 0.49 per cent to the national GDP. This amount was enough to provide a significant impact on the national economy, by improving the quality and employment, boosting sectoral productivity, increasing public funding and controlling inflation at the village level. These developments have contributed to the enormous gains in poverty reduction in Indonesia, cutting the poverty rate by more than half since 1999 to 9.4 per cent in 2019 (World Bank, 2019a).

Reflecting on the program's achievements, the Kemendesa targets, for 2020-2024, to revitalise over 10,000 underdeveloped villages, transmigration, priority rural and disadvantaged areas.

In order to achieve that, Kemendesa set some smart strategies to be carried out, in line with the SDGs target. These initiatives aim to increase connectivity between rural and urban areas by improving road infrastructure, transportation, and access to e-commerce telematics; boost post-harvest





agricultural commodities, by integrating farming-processing-and marketing, to increase villagers' productivity and income.

Indonesia plans to organise communities in the BUMDesa, and collaborate with relevant stakeholders; upgrade human development through skills training or non-formal education, the use of digital platforms for e-learning, as well as certification of rural labor competencies.

To spur economic growth, Kemendes will strengthen rural tourism by developing creative business as a base for village tourism, training, and digital platform support; rural digitalisation with the improvement of infrastructure for telematics in rural areas, integration of rural business with digital e-commerce platforms, e-aggregators, fintech, and commodity export applications, and integration of rural-regional-national data and information.

### **Six pillars of Smart SDG Village Development in Indonesia**

The successful implementation of the Smart Village programme can create a sustainable rural environment and dramatically improve the quality of life at the village level. To achieve that, there are six essential pillars of a smart village that show how the Ministry has tried to localise the SDGs down to the grassroots level:

#### **Smart People**

"Smart people" means creating an inclusive society, where 21st century education is provided and innovation is encouraged to help increase economic prosperity. Various activities such as education and vocational training on

digital marketing, product research and copywriting, cash on delivery transactions, Instagram and Facebook Ads are delivered in Purbalingga, Central Java, to help in building the capacity of hundreds of village youth, especially in digital marketing. In Purbalingga, the collaboration of more than 250 businesses has tripled the monthly income of village youth, from 1.4 million to 4 million Indonesian rupiah. So far, about 752 residents have benefited from the increased pay.

#### **Smart Living**

Smart living focuses on improving social and digital inclusion. The implementation of smart living is exemplified in Beraban Village in Bali that developed a programme called "I Luh Mantul IS DeBest." The programme provides these services: i) One family, one degree; ii) free early childhood education; iii) doctor on call; iv) emergency transportation; v) health assistance; and vi) cash grants to restore the temple. It provides better social welfare services and facilitates the skills development of residents.

#### **Smart Environment**

Smart environment describes how a village government utilises new technology and innovative methodology to manage the sustainability of the natural environment in order to make it liveable for citizens. This has been implemented in Karyamekar Village, Cibatu-West Java where a waste-bank system was created to help communities convert waste into money. Using the WhatsApp application, the Karyamekar BUMDES (village-owned enterprise) allows community members to exchange their garbage for staple food or cash. Hence, the programme helps sustain the environment while helping people earn an income.

#### **Smart Government**

Smart government is about simplifying the government information system using new technologies to increase efficiency and effectiveness as well as transparency and data disclosure. Take Punggul Village-Bali as an example. Punggul village has succeeded in creating a digital village through these innovations: i) providing free wifi; ii) population administration information system (SIAK); iii) Village administration System (SiADek) and

Geographical information system (SiGADIS); iv) Village Development System (SiPEMDES); and v) set up some CCTV spots. The implementation of smart government has made the villages' government services more effective and efficient.

#### **Smart Economy**

Smart economy is the use of intelligent approach and advanced technology aimed at transforming and strengthening economic prosperity. That implementation can be seen at West Detusoko Village in Ende, East Nusa Tenggara that has a digital economic platform, called "dapurkita.com." The platform helps to shorten the supply-chain to give better and fairer price to farmers and consumers. Residents are able to purchase groceries and supplies by just using Whatsapp. BUMDES then delivers the orders straight to their homes.

#### **Smart Mobility**

Smart mobility focuses on increasing the efficiency and quality of rural transportation to improve people's mobility and the flow of goods and services. Transportation services, however, need to be more affordable and environmentally friendly. Villages in Mojokerto, Pasuruan, and Bangkalan District, in Central Java province, work in collaboration with PT Pos Indonesia to provide delivery services to remote villages in various parts of Indonesia. That collaboration impacts on the creation of mixed-modal access and provides a clean and non-motorised mobility option.

#### **The Vision for the Future**

Rural development is a challenge in every country. A smarter way to manage complexities, reduce expenses, increase efficiency, and improve quality of life in rural areas is urgently needed. The smart village concept optimises the use of digital transformation to tackle various issues in rural areas so that services become more efficient and cost effective, making rural areas liveable and sustainable. Therefore, there is a hope that the implementation of smart village programmes in Indonesia will accelerate the achievement of the SDG targets and help rural areas to develop and reduce poverty at the same time. ■



# Snapshots

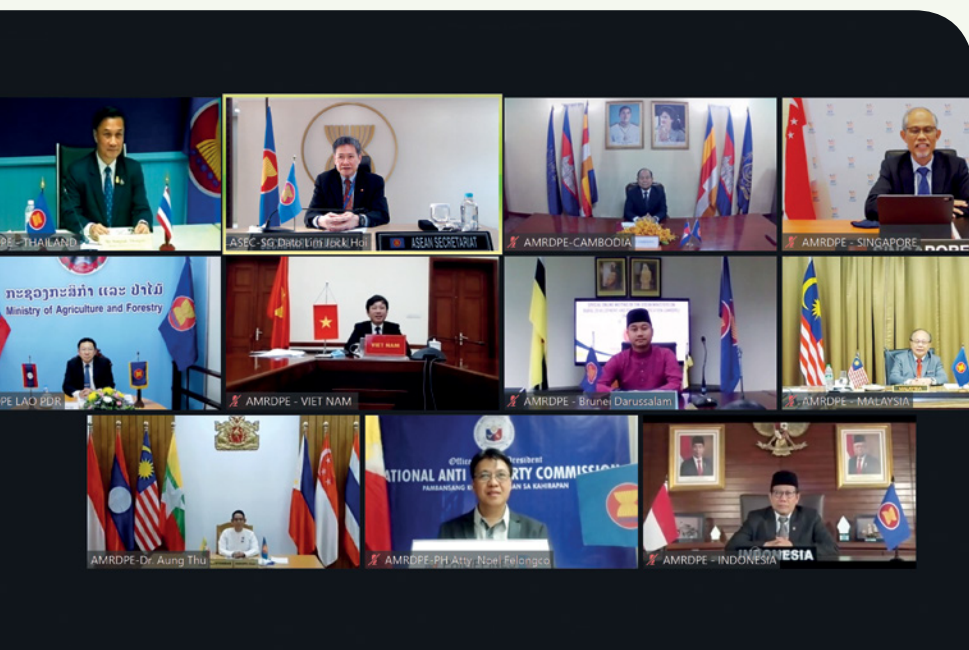
## Reducing Poverty and Building Resilience: Towards a Post-Pandemic Recovery



BY MIGUEL MUSNGI  
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In a special virtual online meeting held on 19 August 2020, the ministers overseeing ASEAN's cooperation on rural development and poverty eradication gathered to discuss initiatives that are being undertaken at the national level to protect the poor from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.





Guided by the theme, “Reducing Poverty and Building Resilience: Towards COVID-19 Recovery,” the ministers recognised that a majority of the poor in the ASEAN region live in rural areas where there is limited access to basic services such as health, education, and social protection, as well as limited infrastructure and connectivity. On the other hand, the poor living in urban areas mostly reside in congested informal settlements with limited protection and employment opportunities.

As the pandemic’s clutches grip urban centers and creep into rural areas, pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities are being exacerbated, damaging local economies, limiting availability of opportunities, and on the whole, endangering the livelihoods and resilience of poor people living in rural and urban areas. Moreover, the pandemic is disproportionately affecting rural women, which impedes them from contributing to the transformation of rural economies. Similarly, the rural youth’s potentials are hampered due to the pandemic’s impact on access to education and skills development, as well as opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

“ASEAN today faces unprecedented challenges posed by the outbreak of

COVID-19,” said Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of Myanmar and Chair of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE). He pointed to the possibility of poverty alleviation initiatives slowing down and a great number of people in the region being pushed further into poverty.

The minister nonetheless still expressed his optimism for ASEAN’s recovery. Such challenges, he said, have “encouraged our determination and commitment to demonstrate our spirit of cohesiveness and responsiveness in addressing the global pandemic and mitigating its socio-economic impacts.” He underscored the critical importance of a “coherent, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach to ensure ASEAN’s timely and effective response to the pandemic.”

**Countries can deliver protection by facilitating public and private investments in activities to revitalise rural and urban economies.**

The ministers agreed that protecting the poor and most vulnerable is paramount in designing fair, inclusive, and equitable recovery initiatives. Countries can deliver protection by facilitating public and private investments in activities to revitalise rural and urban economies. Also, efforts must be made to bridge the digital divide and use the opportunity presented by the recovery from the pandemic to introduce digital infrastructures that would facilitate seamless connectivity between rural, peri-urban, and urban areas. Cutting across these initiatives is the need to address the specific challenges faced by rural women and rural youth that hinder them from unleashing their full potential. Ultimately, reducing poverty and building resilience would require a pro-poor, inclusive, and gender-, and climate-responsive approach to recovery.

At the regional level, ASEAN is in a unique position to leverage development cooperation to build-back better and institutionalise resilience. Secretary-General of ASEAN Dato Lim Jock Hoi, in his remarks, emphasised that in moving towards recovery from the pandemic, “we must take this opportunity to give more attention to rural sector, rural economy and overall rural development efforts.”

Towards this end, the ASEAN Leaders announced at the 36th ASEAN Summit the establishment of the **COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund** which intends to mobilise a regional reserve of medical supplies as well as establish a standard procedure for public health emergencies. The ASEAN Leaders also mandated the development of an **ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework**. The recovery framework aims to provide the strategies and policy guidance on ASEAN’s coordinated efforts to reopen the region’s economy, ensure human security, and strengthen resilience. ■





# ASEAN and External Partners Forge Deeper Cooperation

in the Midst of COVID-19



**BY NGUYEN THAO THI THANH**  
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**In yet another first, the 53rd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and Related Meetings were convened virtually from 9-12 September 2020.**

In view of the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic, major power rivalry and looming economic recession, the 53rd AMM provided an important opportunity for the ministers

to discuss ways and means to advance ASEAN's Community building efforts, and to chart the direction for ASEAN to rise above the adverse impact of the pandemic. Equally important, the meetings allowed ASEAN to solidify its relations with external partners.

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 challenges, and more than eight months into Viet Nam's ASEAN Chairmanship, substantive progress has been realised in the major deliverables under the theme "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN." It is noteworthy that the Chair had successfully led ASEAN to face COVID-19

head-on through its determined and creative efforts to move ASEAN activities from physical platforms into the digital milieu to ensure that work of community building continues unabated.

High on the agenda of the 53rd AMM, which was convened on 9 September 2020, were ASEAN's Community building, pandemic response, regional architecture, as well as regional and international issues. The ministers noted the progress in community building, especially in the implementation of the ASEAN Political Security Community Blueprint, and commended the initiative to commence discussions on a post-2025 ASEAN Community Vision. With respect to COVID-19, the ministers reaffirmed the commitment to work together in addressing the pandemic under a whole-of-community approach, and supported efforts towards economic recovery post-COVID-19. Among the initiatives in the works are an ASEAN Travel Corridor Arrangement to maintain inter-connectedness in the region by facilitating essential travels, establishing an ASEAN Small and Medium Enterprises Recovery Facility, and developing an ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework.

## A special feature of the 53rd AMM is the convening of the 27th ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) and a Special Session of the ACC on Sub-Regional Development back-to-back with the AMM.

Measures to strengthen regional health resilience were also discussed, and the ministers highlighted the need for ASEAN to work together to ensure fair and equitable global access to affordable and safe COVID-19 vaccines for all.

Against the backdrop of increasing major power rivalry, the ministers shared views on maintaining ASEAN Centrality in the regional architecture, and discussed developments in the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula, and Rakhine State. In reference to the South China Sea, the ministers reaffirmed in the Joint Communiqué of the 53rd AMM the need to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. At this particularly challenging time, the ministers called for the strengthening of ASEAN-led mechanisms and continued to advocate for an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture that serves as the foundation for regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

A special feature of the 53rd AMM is the convening of the **27th ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC)** and a **Special Session of the ACC on Sub-Regional Development** back-to-back with the AMM. The ACC, which is an important mechanism in coordinating ASEAN's efforts across three Community pillars, during its 27th Meeting, discussed and reviewed the progress in the implementation of major deliverables of this year's chairmanship, including the Mid-term Reviews of the ASEAN Community Blueprints 2025 and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025. In addition, the ACC discussed the review of the implementation of the ASEAN Charter, efforts to enhance ASEAN's identity and visibility through the display of the ASEAN flag

and use of the ASEAN anthem, as well as the development of a narrative of ASEAN Identity.

The ministers also had extensive discussions on ASEAN's COVID-19 responses. In this regard, they supported amending the Terms of Reference of the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund to facilitate contributions from external partners. They also supported the expeditious establishment of the **ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies (RRMS)** to strengthen ASEAN's preparedness in response to public health emergencies. In addition, they endorsed the concept note of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, which serves as a basis to develop the first draft of the framework and its implementation plans. Meanwhile, the Special Session on Sub-Regional Development marked the Chair's initiative in promoting sub-regional development as complementing ASEAN's overall Community building efforts.

The 53rd AMM also held an **Interface with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights Representatives** on 10 September 2020. The Interface echoed the

importance ASEAN attaches to the promotion and protection of human rights, especially amongst vulnerable groups in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the same day, an **ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's Role for Sustainable Peace and Security** was convened to highlight the importance of women empowerment in ASEAN Community building, and to promote a more gendered approach to peace and conflict in the region. The Dialogue also affirmed support for the women, peace and security agenda.

ASEAN's engagement with external partners was the other highlight in the week-long ministerial discussions. The post-Ministerial conference sessions with Dialogue Partners, the **10th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting** and the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** were convened on 10-12 September 2020. The constructive engagement through the ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three, EAS, ARF, and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) continues to gain traction and contribute significantly to the strengthening of ASEAN Centrality, as well as fostering mutual trust and confidence, and reinforce an open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based regional architecture.

The ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting, among others, reaffirmed their commitment to the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, demonstrating the firm commitment of ASEAN and its partners in upholding an open, inclusive, and







*ASEAN and its partners are working to keep trade and supply chain connectivity amidst the pandemic.*

rules-based multilateral trading system, while reiterating that RCEP remains open for India.

In the effort to further strengthen partnerships and functional cooperation with external partners, the ministers approved plans of action with Canada, India, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and the U.S for the 2021-2025 period. At the same time, ASEAN continues to enlarge its diplomatic footprint globally through its enhancement of relations with Cuba and South Africa as arrangements are being finalised for their ascension to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, which would eventually bring the total of number of signatories to 42. ASEAN also welcomed France and Italy as the regional organisation's latest Development Partners, paving the way for closer cooperative ties and partnership.

From a broader strategic perspective, ASEAN continues to affirm the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, and encourages external partners to collaborate in promoting its principles. ASEAN also enjoined the Dialogue Partners to explore practical cooperation in the key areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, sustainable development, and economic cooperation.

With the pandemic raging globally, ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners underscored the importance of stepping up collaboration to address the challenges brought about by COVID-19, including the provision of medical supplies and vaccines, and the importance of trade and supply chain connectivity. ASEAN welcomed the interest from Dialogue Partners to contribute to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, as well as other ASEAN initiatives such as the RRMS, in addressing the pandemic.

In the security domain, the 27th ARF was successfully convened on 12 September 2020, which saw the adoption of the **Hanoi Plan of Action to Implement the ARF Vision Statement II (HPOA II) for 2020-2025**. The HPOA II sets out the vision and modalities for the 27 ARF participating countries to expand and deepen security cooperation in the region, including addressing current

and emerging security challenges. In addition to a vibrant discussion on regional affairs and international developments, the forum also noted the adoption of the Guide to ARF Processes, Procedures, Practices and Protocol, and welcomed the publication of the *2020 ARF Annual Security Outlook* which saw a record of 22 contributions.

In conclusion, the 53rd AMM, post-Ministerial, and related meetings were convened at a unique moment and through a special modality which has never been used for any preceding AMMs. The fact that these proceedings were attended by ministers from across 12 time zones is a mark of ASEAN Centrality and underscores the importance external partners accord to this series of meetings. It also speaks to the value and relevance of ASEAN's convening power, as well as its leadership in facilitating regional cooperation and discourse. ■

**With the pandemic raging globally, ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners underscored the importance of stepping up collaboration to address the challenges brought about by COVID-19, including the provision of medical supplies and vaccines, and the importance of trade and supply chain connectivity.**

# ASEAN UNVEILS ROADMAP FOR A RESILIENT AND FUTURE READY WORKFORCE



BY JOANNE B. AGBISIT  
AND THE ASEAN EDITORIAL TEAM

**ASEAN's vision of developing a resilient, competitive, and future-ready workforce moves a step closer to reality with the crafting of a new roadmap that will guide Member States to the finish line.**

## The **Roadmap of ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work**

was unveiled by the region's labour and education ministers at the high-level conference on human resources development on 16 September 2020.

"The roadmap contains a list of possible activities to be undertaken by multiple stakeholders from 2020 to 2030 and will inform and complement the development

of the post-2020 ASEAN sectoral work plans," said Secretary-General of ASEAN Dato Lim Jock Hoi.

Most activities in the roadmap are designed to raise the quality and improve inclusiveness of educational and training systems, to render them capable of producing individuals with the digital and transversal skills needed for the 21st-century work environment. A number of activities also aim to promote lifelong learning as a foundation for self-

directed knowledge and skills acquisition which will help workers to adapt to or even thrive amidst a fast changing job landscape.

The Secretary-General mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic only served to emphasise the urgency of developing the region's human resources. "Due to COVID-19, businesses and companies are closing down and unemployment rates are projected to rise considerably. Our world has been irreversibly transformed, and as we enter this new reality, we need to increase the agility and resilience of our human resources to respond to future social and economic vulnerabilities," he said.

Since implementing the roadmap requires considerable resources, the high-level conference included panel sessions with ASEAN's dialogue and external partners to explore areas of common interest and possible cooperation. Many have pledged to support projects in the areas of providing education and skills training to match labour market demands; mainstreaming 21st-century and lifelong learning skills; furthering work on qualifications frameworks and mutual recognition of skills; and improving IT infrastructure, innovation, and the use of technology in teaching and learning approaches, to name a few.

The high-level conference also marked the launch of the ASEAN Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council whose mandate is to serve as "a multisectoral/ cross-sectoral body that provides a platform for coordination, research and development on innovations and monitoring of regional programmes that support the advancement of TVET in the region."

The Secretary-General lauded Viet Nam's leadership in the launch of the roadmap and the ASEAN TVET Council which he said are "key achievements in the implementation of the **Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work** that was adopted during the 36th ASEAN Summit." Viet Nam, which sits as 2020 ASEAN Chair, identified human resources development as one of its key priorities under the socio-cultural pillar, noting that a highly skilled workforce is the backbone of economic development in the region. ■



The introductory videos to the roadmap and ASEAN TVET Council may be accessed at the following link:

<https://asean.org/asean-seals-roadmap-future-ready-human-resources/>



# Parliamentary Diplomacy for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN



**BY LEE YOONG YOONG**  
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**The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), established in 1973 and currently one of ASEAN's oldest entities, plays a key role in the ASEAN Community building process.**



AIPA's objectives are to build closer cooperation among the 10 national legislatures and their members of parliament, and capitalise on the greater participation of ASEAN peoples, via inter-parliamentary cooperation, to contribute to the attainment of regional goals and aspirations.

Just like the Jakarta-based ASEAN Secretariat, whose mandate is to render technical and executive support to the ASEAN Member States in achieving better efficiency and coordination of the various activities and projects, AIPA, too, has a small secretariat team in Jakarta. It presently has about 20 staff, headed by the AIPA Secretary-General.

AIPA convened its annual General Assembly—its highest decision-

making mechanism—in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 8-10 September 2020. Chaired by Madame Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, President of the National Assembly of Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the General Assembly ran on the theme, "Parliamentary Diplomacy for a Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN."

In addition to the participation of ASEAN Member Parliaments, the online assembly was joined by Observer-Parliaments from Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and Timor-Leste, among others. The ASEAN Secretariat, headed by Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, Kung Phoak, was also in attendance.

Speaking during the plenary session, Deputy Secretary-General Kung highlighted the strategic role of members of parliament in assisting their governments and helping their people pull through the COVID-19 pandemic. He remarked that AIPA, through members of parliaments, is well-positioned to reach out to ASEAN citizens, and can serve as their intermediary to policymakers. This forms part of ASEAN's efforts to lay the foundations for an inclusive as well as a people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN Community. At the General Assembly, he also delivered a presentation before a separately-convened AIPA committee meeting on how AIPA can work with ASEAN governments towards achieving a post-COVID-19 recovery framework.

Though COVID-19 dominated the discussions, it was not the sole agenda of the assembly. For the first time, AIPA held a special inaugural 60-minute session for young parliamentarians to have a vibrant exchange of ideas on ASEAN Community building. Deputy Secretary-General Kung, as an invited keynote speaker, reinforced the notion that young members of parliament can indeed bridge inter-generational gaps in policy formulation processes as they internalise the ASEAN Leaders' vision of regional integration. ■

**For the first time, AIPA held a special inaugural 60-minute session for young parliamentarians to have a vibrant exchange of ideas on ASEAN Community building.**

# DEVELOPING A SENSE OF “WE-NESS”:

## ASEAN Holds Virtual Consultation on Narrative of ASEAN Identity



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**Chairs of participating sectoral bodies across ASEAN’s three Community Pillars gathered virtually on 31 August 2020 for the Cross Sectoral and Cross Pillar Consultation on the Narrative of ASEAN Identity. The chairs discussed the ways forward to mainstream ASEAN Identity.**

Secretary-General of ASEAN Dato Lim Jock Hoi, emphasised that in order for ASEAN to gain wider traction, there is a need to foster not just awareness, but also a sense of belonging and ownership among ASEAN’s 660 million people. To be able to do this, he stressed that “we need to develop a sense of “we-ness” by providing a narrative that addresses fundamental questions, such as “Who are we? What do we stand for? and What does ASEAN mean?”

“ASEAN Identity must become the soul that binds ASEAN as it progresses as one family. This is particularly important as ASEAN transforms itself from a society into a community, with shared values and common vision. In the coming years, the ASEAN Identity must be streamlined into the work plans of all the sectoral bodies from the three pillars of ASEAN,” said Indonesia’s Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi in her opening remarks.

The narrative of ASEAN Identity underscores the need to develop a collective identity that can resonate with the ASEAN citizens. It combines inherited values, or values that the people of the ASEAN region ascribe to, which have been passed on from generation to generation, and constructed values, or values that draw from the institutional values and practices of ASEAN.



**“ASEAN Identity must become the soul that binds ASEAN as it progresses as one family. This is particularly important as ASEAN transforms itself from a society into a community, with shared values and common vision.”**

While ASEAN Identity has been mentioned in key documents of ASEAN, including the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and the ASEAN motto, which calls for “One Vision, One Identity, One Community,” there has been no articulation of what constitutes ASEAN identity. The narrative therefore is intended to provide the foundation of a distinct ASEAN Identity that will remind ASEAN Member States of their shared history and vision. The parameters to measure the success of ASEAN identity are threefold: awareness, which pertains to the proportion of ASEAN citizens who associate themselves as part of ASEAN; relevance, which pertains to people’s understanding of how they benefit from ASEAN; and pride, which looks at the degree of pride arising from being part of ASEAN.

The idea to develop the narrative of ASEAN Identity was first broached following the adoption of the **Yogyakarta Declaration on Embracing Culture of Prevention to Enrich ASEAN Identity** by the Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts in October 2018. In 2019, it was discussed and endorsed by the Senior Officials Meeting for Culture and Arts. To foster a stronger sense of ownership among all sectoral bodies as well as among other stakeholders, two rounds of ad-referendum consultations were held from May to August 2020 involving sectoral bodies across the three Pillars, and a virtual consultative meeting with civil society organisations was likewise conducted on 24 August 2020.

The narrative of ASEAN Identity will be the main deliverable of the **2020 Year of ASEAN Identity** and one of the key deliverables of Viet Nam’s Chairmanship, to be adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 37th ASEAN Summit in November 2020. ■





Angkor Wat Temple  
Cambodia

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