



"International Conference ASEAN Golden Anniversary: Embracing ASEAN Community, Harmonizing Diversity"

**POLICY RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**

Discussants :

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2. Dr. Linda Quayle (University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus)
3. Mr. Ekraj Imran Sabur (Asian Muslim Action Network)
4. Mr. Chilman Arisman (Permanent Mission of Republic of Indonesia to ASEAN)
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Amidst many obstacles in integrating ASEAN as a region, policymakers should prioritize the expansion of ASEAN awareness into sustainable actions. ASEAN Community Blueprints also had been established and stands as a guideline to decision making in the ASEAN-related policy projection.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Republic of Indonesia has highlighted the prominence of innovative ideas without straying from ASEAN's core principles. There are several critical insights from the MOFA Officials regarding ASEAN Integration :

1. Economic pillar would stand as a key pillar to opening the opportunity of another pillar's expansion. Trade in goods and service is still playing a central role in regional economic activities. However, the development gap in ASEAN is still broadening over time, therefore collaboration with other funding actors such as international donor agencies are extensively accepted. Thus, the recipient status of most ASEAN member states has locked their development policy into the donor-driven development policy.





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2. Empowering ASEAN Secretariat to gradually release dependence toward extra-ASEAN actors, re-allocation of the budget of the secretariat is urgently needed. Due to budget limitations, a number of ASEAN commemorative events were financed by other states. This needs to be addressed to make the Secretariat more autonomous in its policy and actions.
3. In order to achieving the milestones toward ASEAN 2025 Roadmap, ASEAN might absorb best practices from European Integration, not always in terms of regional economic union but also the connectivity of its socio-political and socio-cultural integration.
4. ASEAN needs to involve more non-political actors to achieve its goals in people-to-people connectivity to bridge the human development gap. Studies in academic world in Southeast Asian Studies should always be expanded and linked.

The speakers of the conference had discussed those above points.

The political divides among ASEAN member states is relatively wide. Therefore to build similar grounds of policymaking is challenging to some extent. Several states do not acknowledge universal human rights principles, other countries are embracing socialist politics, while the others are democratic and have stronger ties with extra-ASEAN countries than their neighbour. Despite the encounters, the speakers approved that economic cooperation would serve as a opportunity to bring ASEAN members closer. Here are the points of discussion :

1. Economic Pillars

- a. Intra-regional trade volume is still inferior to expectation. This is adressed as a structural problem in ASEAN member states. However the cross border trade among ASEAN member states also increases in term of activites, and it is not captured by ASEAN statistics.



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- b. Import outside the region is still high in volume, including arms trade. However, major countries' policy should not dictate the orientation of ASEAN Integration process.
- c. Service trade among ASEAN member states should be increased to lift the competitiveness of ASEAN Citizens.
- d. ASEAN Economic Community hosts for about 600 million people, while a large numbers of them are engaging in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs could be a mean to expand credit access, capital inflow in the investment framework. Tourism industry could boost the involvement of SMEs' business into ASEAN markets, while also promoting or linking e-commerce and startup business in each country. Administratively, the visa exemption policy should be extended for constructive exchange activities other than working permits.

2. Socio-Cultural Pillars

- a. Education of ASEAN Community values, like universal human rights, should be dispersed into curricula. This practice have been implemented in Vietnam.
- b. ASEAN Secretary should facilitate capacity building programs and extend them to each member states' national secretary. Other than that, the ASEAN Secretariat should strengthen its research capacity and building databases for research related to ASEAN and South East Asian Studies in General.
- c. Streamlining of meetings among ASEAN Bodies is needed to expand many points of view to the citizen.
- d. ASEAN should encourage grassroot transliteration of ASEAN Official Documents, including ASEAN Anthem, ASEAN Blueprints, to accelerate the dispersion of ASEAN values.
- e. Centre of ASEAN Studies in South East Asia and beyond should be facilitated to communicate in a network, maintained by ASEAN.



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- f. Social media manpower should also be added to reach out more audiences especially to younger generation. The effectivity of social media utilization during humanitarian situations is already tested, therefore ASEAN should employ this new media to response on emergency dealings for AHA Center for instance.

3. Political and Security Pillars

- a. ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Association could stand as an institution to connect ASEAN Governments and to communicate policy innovation that might come in activity of regular inter-parliamentary visits.
- b. ASEAN Member states should refrain themselves from using aggressive approach and threatening approach to interact, both in statements and actions towards each other. Recent pressures were seen among a group ASEAN Citizen and civil organizations to revoke Nobel Peace Prize Award received by Aung San Suu Kyi due to mishandling of Myanmar's domestic political uprisings.
- c. ASEAN could enlarge its peacekeeping participation in global level, however the humanitarian responses and transnational threats inside the region should be addressed first. Under "One ASEAN, One Response" principle, ASEAN could increase the number of capacity building activities for the government and civil society organizations to address humanitarian issues.
- d. Strong national leaders often determine the direction of ASEAN Integration. As populism rises as a trend globally, ASEAN requires strong leadership by its Secretary General to bring these leaders together to build mutual to solve regional problems through ASEAN Meetings.