



The Habibie Center

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## Towards a Highly Integrated ASEAN: Ensuring Greater Participation of the CLMV countries in the ASEAN Economic Community



### SUMMARY/BRIEF

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) offers many benefits to each ASEAN Member States. However, the benefits will not likely be evenly distributed as there are different levels of development between the ASEAN-6 (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) and the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam). The latter group will struggle to reap the benefits from the AEC as they are less competitive compared to the ASEAN-6 due to immense challenges such as scarcity of skilled labor, undeveloped infrastructure, poor investment climate, and low awareness of private sectors as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In order to achieve a highly integrated ASEAN, the CLMV countries needs to resolve those problems and narrow the development gap between them and the ASEAN-6. This is to ensure greater participation in the AEC so that the CLMV countries will be able to fully reap the benefits from the AEC.

This edition of ASEAN Briefs will examine the constraints facing the CLMV countries, examine ASEAN's initiative to narrow the development gap among ASEAN Member States, and give possible recommendations to ensure greater participation of the CLMV countries in the ASEAN Economic Community.

ASEAN Briefs is a regular publication about current developments on ASEAN regionalism, especially in the Political-Security, Economic as well as Socio - Cultural Pillars.

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## Introduction

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint 2025 which was adopted at the 27th ASEAN Summit on 22 November 2015, to build upon the previous document, the AEC Blueprint 2015, provides strategic measures for the implementation of the AEC from 2016-2025. It aims to create ASEAN as a highly integrated and cohesive economy; a competitive, innovative, and dynamic ASEAN; enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation; a resilient, inclusive, people-oriented, and people-centred ASEAN; and a global ASEAN. In order to achieve these goals, ASEAN policy makers have been creating strategies and supporting work plans.

Many argue that the AEC will bring benefits for each ASEAN Member States. The AEC will allow free movement of skilled labor across the region, integration to the global market, and connectivity improvement, to name a few. In addition, the establishment of the AEC has made the region become an attractive location for foreign investors. Many of them have been eyeing ASEAN since the region has so much potential such as a growing middle income class, quite robust economic growth despite global economic slowdown, a huge market, and a relatively stable region.

However, the benefits of economic integration will not be automatically and immediately felt by the CLMV countries since there is a development gap between the ASEAN-6 (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) and the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam). Due to different levels of development, the benefits may not be evenly distributed among ASEAN Member States. Also because of the gap, the deadline to meet all the commitments stipulated in the previous AEC Blueprint 2015 is different for the ASEAN-6 and the CLMV countries. While the ASEAN-6 should complete their commitments by the end of 2016, the CLMV are given more time to complete such commitments until 2018.

Although the CLMV countries are given more time to prepare themselves, it indeed remains an immense

challenge for them to fully integrate into the AEC and take full benefits from it given their low development achievements in many areas.

## Constraints for the CLMV countries to fully integrate

The CLMV countries will reap limited benefits from the AEC as they have lower levels of economic development compared to the other ASEAN-6. The CLMV have less skilled labors, less developed infrastructure, poor investment climate, and low awareness of private sectors as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that make them struggle to participate in the AEC and reap benefits from it.

### Shortage of Skilled Labors

CLMV have less educated and low skilled labor, thus there will likely be limited participation from the CLMV countries in the labor market. ASEAN has arranged for the free movement of skilled labor in the region through the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs). It aims to facilitate the movement of eight specific professionals such as engineers, nurses, architects, surveyors, dentists, doctors, accountants, and tourism professionals. These professions require high education and skills. In this regard, it will likely be hard for labor in CLMV countries to meet the requirements for the free movement of skilled labor compared to skilled labor from the ASEAN-6.

The competition in labor markets will happen in two ways: (1) the skilled labor from the CLMV countries who seek jobs in the ASEAN-6 will compete with skilled labor in the hosting countries and (2) the skilled labor in CLMV countries will compete with skilled labor from the ASEAN-6 who seek jobs in CLMV countries. Even though there will not be a sudden influx of skilled labor from the ASEAN-6, there will nonetheless be an estimated 5 – 10% of labor forces in the CLMV countries that originate from the ASEAN-6 according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>1</sup> This will put more pressure on the labor force within the CLMV countries as the competition among skilled labors will be intensified.

**Table 1. Global Competitiveness Index 2015-2016 : Education**

No.	Country	Higher Education and Training	Secondary Education Enrollment, gross	Tertiary Education Enrollment, gross
1.	Singapore	1	17	9
2.	Malaysia	36	100	69
3.	Thailand	56	79	52
4.	Philippines	63	86	81
5.	Indonesia	65	88	75
6.	Viet Nam	95	96	87
7.	Lao PDR	112	118	97
8.	Cambodia	123	122	101
9.	Myanmar	134	120	104

Source: World Economic Forum (2015)

Scarcity of skilled labor in the CLMV countries is due to poorly developed education systems. Based on the Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016, the CLMV countries ranks in terms of higher education and training –the overall rank for education- are lower than the ASEAN-6 with Myanmar at the bottom. Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar are ranked 95th, 112th, 123rd, and 134th out of 140 countries respectively.<sup>2</sup> As shown in table 1, the CLMV countries also do not have good records for secondary and tertiary gross enrollment. It shows that the education systems in the CLMV countries are unable to produce high skilled labor since many of their workforce do not finish secondary and/or tertiary education. Improving education system is highly important for the CLMV countries to have skilled labor that are able to compete with the ASEAN-6.

Another challenges facing labor in the CLMV countries is language ability. As non-English speaking countries, many laborers in the CLMV countries have low English proficiency. It will become a burden for laborers if they intend to work in other ASEAN countries but they do not have the appropriate language skills. In order to be able to compete and participate in the AEC, laborers in the CLMV countries should improve their ability to speak English.

### ***Inadequate Infrastructure Development***

In terms of infrastructure development, the CLMV countries lag behind their ASEAN counterparts. Among the CLMV countries, Vietnam has better infrastructure, even above the Philippines. On the contrary, Singapore is globally ranked second as it manages to develop proper infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Lao PDR, although it has built several infrastructure such as roads, ports, and airport however

it still does not have a domestic railway infrastructure as indicated on table 2.<sup>4</sup> This means that Lao PDR does not have adequate infrastructure to support movement of goods within the country itself and to other countries as it has limited infrastructure.

In addition, Lao PDR is the only land-locked country in Southeast Asia. Being a land-locked country with inadequate infrastructure has created high transportation cost that leads to high price of goods exported to other countries. This condition reduce Lao PDR’s competitiveness compare to the ASEAN-6.

Cambodia which is ranked 101th in terms of infrastructure, also has poor infrastructure due to poor maintenance and the long civil war that brought destruction to the country.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Cambodia has a lack of resources such as in financing and human resources to support infrastructure development in the country, thus hindering the development of infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> Although there are some funds allocated to maintain infrastructure, it has not been well disbursed and used effectively. Sometimes the disbursement is delayed or even postponed to the next fiscal year as a result of the poor management in institutions involved.<sup>7</sup>

Backward infrastructure has put Myanmar in the lowest rank when compared to its fellow ASEAN Member States. Myanmar is ranked 136th out of 140 countries in the quality of roads. This implies that road connectivity is not well established even with its close neighbors such as Thailand and China.

Connectivity is highly important in a regional economic integration. If a country is less connected then it will find difficulties in taking the benefits from regional economic integration. Inadequate infrastructure in the CLMV countries has made them less connected with neighboring countries and has reduced their

**Table 2. Global Competitiveness Index 2015-2016 : Infrastructure**

No.	Country	Infrastructure	Quality of Roads	Quality of Railroad Infrastructure	Quality of Port Infrastructure	Quality of Air Transport Infrastructure
1.	Singapore	2	3	8	2	1
2.	Malaysia	24	15	13	16	21
3.	Thailand	44	51	78	52	38
4.	Indonesia	62	80	43	82	66
5.	Vietnam	76	93	48	76	75
6.	Philippines	90	97	84	103	98
7.	Lao PDR	98	83	N.A.	130	94
8.	Cambodia	101	94	100	83	100
9.	Myanmar	134	136	96	123	132

Source :World Economic Forum (2015)

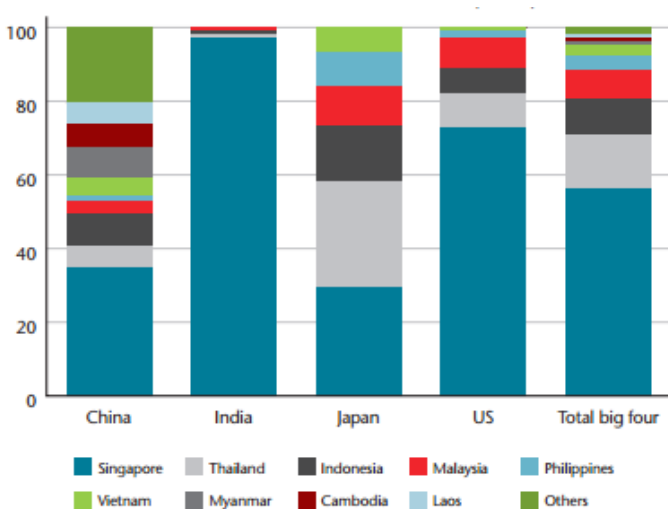
Note: Only 9 ASEAN Member States’ data available on The Global Competitiveness Report 2015 – 2016

competitiveness. As such, the CLMV countries will struggle to compete with their fellow ASEAN Member States. Thus, reaping the benefits from the AEC will likely be limited.

### Poor Investment climate

Since the CLMV countries have relatively poor investment climate compared to the other ASEAN Member States such as Singapore and Malaysia, they become less attractive for investors therefore they may not be able to fully benefit from the foreign direct investment (FDI) coming to the region as a result of the AEC. Although ASEAN aims to create a single investment region, however most investments rarely go to the CLMV countries. Instead, it mostly goes to the more developed countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. From figure 1. it can be seen that Singapore is the most popular country in Southeast Asia that attracts investment from the big four global economies: China, India, Japan, and the U.S. This is followed by Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia as the most popular country in the region for attracting investment. Singapore is still undoubtedly an attractive country for investment as it has low tax, adequate infrastructure, and a highly educated labor force.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1. China, Japan, US, and India's investment to ASEAN in 2012**



Source : ICAEW (2015)

Investors often come to a country that provides ease of doing business. As shown in table 3, it can be seen that there is a wide gap among ASEAN Member States with regards to the ease of doing business. According to the World Bank's 2016 Ease of Doing Business survey, while Singapore maintains to be the easiest state to do business, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar lag far behind which are globally ranked 127th, 134th, and 167th respectively.<sup>9</sup> Among the CLMV countries, Viet Nam has a better ranking as it climbed 3 places to 90th out of 189 countries in the 2016 Ease of Doing Business survey. Although Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar

have risen in the overall ranking from the 2015 Ease of Doing Business survey to the 2016 Ease of Doing Business survey, however there are much more that should be done to create a better business environment.<sup>10</sup> This includes ease of starting a business, obtaining credit, and dealing with construction permits.

**Table 3. Ease of Doing Business (DB) 2015 and 2016 Rank**

No.	Country	DB 2015 Rank	DB 2016 Rank
1	Singapore	1	1
2	Malaysia	17	18
3	Thailand	46	49
4	Brunei Darussalam	105	84
5	Viet Nam	93	90
6	Philippines	97	103
7	Indonesia	120	109
8	Cambodia	133	127
9	Lao PDR	139	134
10	Myanmar	177	167

Source : World Bank (2015 and 2016)

It is indeed hard for the CLMV countries to attract investment to their respective countries since the investment climate in the CLMV countries is not as conducive as other ASEAN Member States such as Singapore and Malaysia. Each CLMV countries are facing different constraints in attracting investors. In the case of Lao PDR, it is able to provide low cost labor force that can attract investors. However, at the same time investors also require high skilled and educated labor to fulfil positions in manufacturing or technology companies.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, there is not enough skilled labor in Lao PDR that match the requirements of investors. According to The Enterprise Survey, almost 20% of firms said that inadequate labor force is a constraint for private sector expansion.<sup>12</sup> The lack of skilled labor is seen as a bigger problem than poor infrastructure. This limitation will make foreign investors hesitant to invest in Lao PDR.

Doing business in Cambodia is also not easy. According to the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2016 report, Cambodia is ranked 127th out of 189 countries, up from 133rd in 2014. While the overall ranking increased, starting business in Cambodia still takes time as it needs 7 procedures and 87 days. In addition, in the category of protecting investors, Cambodia dropped down two ratings from 109th in 2015 to 111th in 2016.<sup>13</sup>

Myanmar has different concerns. As Myanmar has been under Western sanctions for a long time, its financial sector has not been well developed. As such, the private sector finds it difficult to get access to finance. According to the Investment Climate Assessment, the top priority for the private sector in Myanmar is access

to finance.<sup>14</sup> Aside from that, investors are concerned about law enforcement in Myanmar. If the law has not been fully established, it will create uncertainty among investors. They are also concerned whether arbitration as a mechanism to find solutions in case there is a dispute between investors and local government has already taken place.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, foreign investors who come to Myanmar seek non-discriminatory policy from the government as they want to be in the same level of playing field with domestic investors.

Although Viet Nam is considered as the most advanced country among the CLMV country, it still faces challenges in attracting investors. Those barriers include inadequate infrastructure and lack of clear and transparent rules and regulations.<sup>16</sup> Viet Nam also has a problem in its legal system. It lacks experience in resolving problems between foreign and local companies.<sup>17</sup> Mechanisms to protect investor need to be improved as well. Based on the Ease of Doing Business 2016 Report, Viet Nam was ranked 122th in 2015, down one point from 121th in the previous year. In terms of protecting investors, Cambodia is considered better than Viet Nam.

### **Low Awareness and Participation among Private Sector and Small-Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

The private sectors' involvement in a regional integration is highly important as it is basically they who will do the business and utilize the AEC. In order to utilize it optimally, private sectors should be fully aware of the AEC. However, it is not the case with private sectors and SMEs in the CLMV countries.

In Cambodia, business conglomerates do not really know about AEC. They have limited knowledge on the AEC as they are not well-informed. Coordination between private sectors and government do not always work. Business people often question whether they are able to influence policy making process. They also complain that most documents regarding the AEC are mostly available in English, not in the local language hence it is difficult for them to understand. In addition, lack of preparatory briefing for meetings is also one of the concerns among business people in Cambodia. On the contrary, the government also complains that although they have arranged an event or workshop for private sectors to increase their awareness on the AEC however the attendance and participation is pretty low. This often happens in both regional and national meetings as well.<sup>18</sup>

SMEs in Cambodia also have limited knowledge about the implication of the AEC. Due to this condition, most of SMEs are afraid that products from companies of other ASEAN Member States will be flooding their market. They are aware that in order to win the competition, they have to produce high quality products that meet the standards in the region. However, it is indeed challenging for small companies in Cambodia to get

certification and meet the standards. It can take years for them to get certifications.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, Viet Nam also faces a similar problem. Viet Nam's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) conducted a survey that showed only 40% of local business in Viet Nam are aware of the implications of the AEC. The percentage is relatively low compare to the ASEAN-6 such as Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia.<sup>20</sup>

The problem with the private sectors' involvement in the AEC is not only whether they are fully informed or not but also whether companies in the CLMV countries are able to compete with companies in other ASEAN Member States. Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand have big companies that have become a regional player. In the banking industry, Singapore has the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS) Bank and OCBC Bank while Malaysia has Maybank. Those banks have already opened branches in most of ASEAN Member States. In addition, in the aviation industry, Singapore's Singapore Airlines, Thailand's Thai Airways, and Malaysia's Air Asia have been dominating the aviation market in the region.

Meanwhile, the CLMV countries do not have big companies that have strong presence in the region. This raises a concern as to whether companies originating from the CLMV countries will be able to compete with big companies from other ASEAN Member States. They have to raise the standards of their services and products in order to compete. However, meeting the standards set by the existing big companies will be challenging. Lack of information and lack of capacity experienced by companies in the CLMV countries will likely hinder their participation in the AEC.

### **ASEAN's Effort to Narrow the Development Gap**

ASEAN Leaders have long been aware of the asymmetric development between the older and the newer ASEAN Member States in several areas. As such, ASEAN launched the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) at the 4<sup>th</sup> Informal Summit of ASEAN Leaders in 2000 and adopted the Hanoi Declaration on Narrowing the Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration in 2001. The IAI aims to narrow the development gap within ASEAN with the principle of 'prosper thy neighbor' or 'ASEAN helps ASEAN' whereby 'the advanced' ASEAN Member States share their expertise and experience with the newer members.<sup>21</sup> These initiatives are adopted to promote inclusive integration among ASEAN Member States.

The first IAI work plan which was implemented in 2002-2008 aimed to address four areas such as infrastructure (transport and energy), human resource development, information and communication, and regional economic integration. The first work plan was followed by the second work plan covering the period 2009-2015. It intended to support the three ASEAN Community Blueprints.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Aside from the IAI and its work plans, there are also other initiatives to narrow the development gap among ASEAN Member States with the assistance of ASEAN dialogue partners and international organizations. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program which is supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other donors aims to enhance economic relations among six countries: Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The program focuses on several sectors such as transport, energy, private sector involvement, and trade.<sup>23</sup>

Another initiative is the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC). It intends to promote economic integration among ASEAN Member States and ASEAN dialogue partners such as China, South Korea, and Japan. It is implemented through projects related to infrastructure and human capital development.<sup>24</sup>

However, there are several weaknesses on the implementation of those initiatives, including the IAI. The result of the study conducted by Quah Boon Huat on the first IAI work plan indicated that there are some concerns about the effectiveness of the projects and whether the aims and objectives of the projects have been actually achieved.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the Report on the Mid-Term Review of the IAI also raised several issues such as the finding that some programmes are regarded to have low quality, there is a lack of coordination between ASEAN and other development frameworks, and ASEAN-6 do not have the capability to fund all of the projects in the IAI.<sup>26</sup>

Similar arguments were voiced by the former New Zealand Ambassador to ASEAN, Amb. David Taylor, who explained two key issues surrounding the implementation of the IAI. Firstly, the need to make IAI projects more coherent in the sense that the projects should be subject to the key objectives and the projects should be guided by targets and assessment. Secondly, ownership of the CLMV countries to the IAI should be increased by involving key CLMV agencies so that they can identify their own needs.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the CLMV countries will be able to experience tangible outcomes from the IAI.

There are also some concerns on the implementation of the GMS program. Specifically in the area of transport programs, there is a lack of involvement from the private sector in the preparation and implementation of the transport programs. Since their involvement is important, they should not be limited to only a contributor or observer role.<sup>28</sup> In general, the GMS program has given less attention on 'soft' aspects of cooperation, which is the consequences of the projects on the people. It has not really taken into consideration the impact of physical infrastructure development to other areas as it may cause environmental degradation, illegal migration of workers, and transmission of communicable diseases. These are issues that need to be addressed.<sup>29</sup>

If the CLMV countries are unable to overcome their constraints and to have better economic development, they will not likely get full benefits from the AEC. According to Vo Tri Tanh, the CLMV run the risk of being marginalized during the process of regional economic integration.<sup>30</sup> Uneven development will pose a risk to ASEAN integration. For example, different levels of development between Thailand and its neighbours have led to migration of undocumented laborers to Thailand.<sup>31</sup> Failure to address this issue will only exacerbate the problem in the years to come, especially given the full implementation of the AEC.

In order to push for greater participation from the CLMV countries, those countries should resolve their problems to reduce the development gap between them and the ASEAN-6. Successful development of the CLMV countries is not only important for themselves but also for ASEAN integration as a whole. It will be hard for ASEAN to be "A Resilient, Inclusive, People-Oriented, and People-Centered ASEAN" as depicted in the AEC Blueprint 2025 if there are some ASEAN Member States that are left behind.

Domestic solutions should also be accompanied with regional solutions. The ASEAN-6 along with ASEAN dialogue partners and international organizations should work together in the narrowing development gap among ASEAN Member States. Comprehensive solutions that come from both the domestic and regional levels are expected to accelerate development in the CLMV countries.

The ASEAN-6 should not expect the CLMV countries to have the same development as them, however the CLMV countries should at least have a certain level of development that will make them able to participate in the AEC. Hence, they will be able to reap maximum benefits from the AEC. In addition, ASEAN needs to ensure that the establishment of the ASEAN Community really brings benefit for the CLMV countries by giving tangible benefits that can be felt by the people in the CLMV countries.

There are some recommendations for policy makers to further ensuring greater participation of the CLMV countries in the AEC.

First, the government of the CLMV countries need to further strengthen its domestic capacity by undertaking comprehensive structural reforms such as improving education system, improving the quality of labor, establishing vocational training, accelerating infrastructure development, and creating a better investment climate. By improving domestic capacity, the CLMV countries will be able to participate in the AEC and reap benefits from it.

Second, ASEAN should further improve the quality of existing initiatives to deliver good projects that meet the goals and objectives of the initiatives. One thing that can be done is through better engagement with

local institutions in each CLMV countries in creating and implementing its initiatives. It will allow the local institutions to provide inputs and recommendations that are relevant for their respective countries as the problems may be different in one country to another. As such, the implementation of various initiatives to narrow the development gap can be relevant and effective. Moreover, it will create a greater ownership from the CLMV countries.

Third, ASEAN should do more in improving awareness among the private sector and SMEs in the CLMV countries. ASEAN should give better information on the cost and benefits from the AEC and also on how to fully utilize it. Better engagement between ASEAN policy makers and the private sector is important to ensure private sector and SMEs' participation in the AEC. If the economic players can better understand and utilize the AEC then their participation can be improved.

Fourth, ASEAN should continue to work closely with ASEAN dialogue partners and international organizations by utilizing their expertise in narrowing the development gap among ASEAN Member States to ensure participation from the CLMV countries. In this regard, ASEAN dialogue partners and international organizations will be able to provide valuable technical and financial assistance for ASEAN in general and the CLMV countries in particular.

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**The Habibie Center** was founded by Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie and family in 1999 as an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation. The vision of The Habibie Center is to create a structurally democratic society founded on the morality and integrity of cultural and religious values.

The mission of The Habibie Center are **first**, to establish a structurally and culturally democratic society that recognizes, respects, and promotes human rights by undertaking study and advocacy of issues related to democratization and human rights, and **second**, to increase the effectiveness of the management of human resources and the spread of technology.

*Cover Image: Tan Son Nhat International Airport*  
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## **ASEAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

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### **About ASEAN Studies Program**

The ASEAN Studies Program was established on February 24, 2010, to become a center of excellence on ASEAN related issues, which can assist in the development of the ASEAN Community by 2015. The Habibie Center through its ASEAN Studies Program, alongside other institutions working towards the same goal, hopes to contribute to the realization of a more people-oriented ASEAN that puts a high value on democracy and human rights.

The objective of the ASEAN Studies Program is not merely only to conduct research and discussion within academic and government circles, but also to strengthen public awareness by forming a strong network of civil society in the region that will be able to help spread the ASEAN message. With the establishment of ASEAN Studies Program, The Habibie Center aims to play its part within our capabilities to the ASEAN regional development.

### **About Talking ASEAN**

Talking ASEAN is a monthly public dialogue held at The Habibie Center in Jakarta. Covering a wide array of issues related to ASEAN, Talking ASEAN addresses topics of: Economic Integration, Socio-cultural, & Democracy, human rights and regional peace, among others. Featuring local and visiting experts, Talking ASEAN is one of a series of twelve dialogues regularly held each month and open to a target audience consisting of ASEAN officials, foreign ambassadors & diplomats, academics, university students, businesses, and the media.

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## Talking ASEAN in Lao PDR on "Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the ASEAN Economic Community"

The Habibie Center and the Institute for Foreign Affairs (IFA) held a Talking ASEAN public dialogue on "Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the ASEAN Economic Community."



### Talking ASEAN in Cambodia on "Water Resource Security in the Mekong Region"

The Habibie Center and The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP) held a Talking ASEAN public dialogue on "Water Resource Security in the Mekong Region."

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### Why does Indonesia need a debate on internet freedom?

10 March 2016

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### Talking ASEAN in Lao PDR on "Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the ASEAN Economic Community"

25 February 2016

The Habibie Center and the Institute for Foreign Affairs (IFA) held a Talking ASEAN public



### Talking ASEAN on "Countering ISIS in Southeast Asia"

18 February 2016

Talking ASEAN on "Countering ISIS in Southeast Asia"

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### ASEAN Briefs



#### The Role of Civil Society in Countering Religious Extremism in ASEAN: Lessons Learned from Indonesia

Special Volume, Issue 2 / March 2016

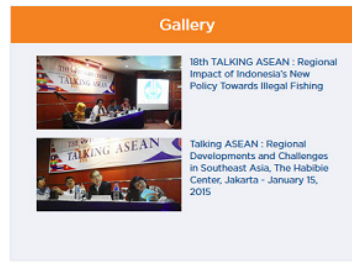
### Discussion Reports



#### Regional Dialogue and Talking ASEAN Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the ASEAN Economic Community

The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA)

### Gallery



18th TALKING ASEAN - Regional Impact of Indonesia's New Policy Towards Illegal Fishing

Talking ASEAN - Regional Developments and Challenges in Southeast Asia, The Habibie Center, Jakarta - January 15, 2015

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# OUR PUBLICATIONS

<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Issue 3/April 2014 <b>Migrant Workers Rights</b> The AEC 2015 and Free Movement of Labor: Case Studies of Indonesia and the Philippines</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Issue 4/May 2014 <b>Small and Medium Enterprises</b> Access to Finance in ASEAN Countries: Innovations and Regional Cooperation</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Issue 5/June 2014 <b>The Bali Concord III:</b> Towards a More Common ASEAN Platform on Global Issues</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Issue 6/July 2014 <b>The AICHR and NHRI Effectiveness</b> In Its Implementation of Human Rights Protection in The Region. Case Studies : The Philippines and Thailand</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 1 / Issue 1 / September 2014 <b>Strengthening Regional Security Architecture:</b> Ensuring ASEAN Centrality through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the ASEAN Community's progress in the number of migrant workers in the region and the impact of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) on the labor market. It also discusses the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>ASEAN BRIEFS is a regular publication about current developments in ASEAN cooperation, especially in the field of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the Bali Concord III, which is a landmark agreement in the history of ASEAN. It discusses the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the effectiveness of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in the region. It discusses the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Strengthening regional security architecture by ensuring ASEAN centrality is a major agenda for Asia-Pacific's stability. The changing nature of power distribution in the region becomes a major underlying factor to form a wider security platform to create regional stability. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is a security platform in the Asia-Pacific. Accordingly, ASEAN as the driver of the ARF wants to form the regional security architecture with ASEAN centrality being the core objective.</p>

<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 2 / Issue 2 / October 2014 <b>Removing Infrastructure Bottlenecks to Increase Indonesia's Competitiveness towards the ASEAN Economic Community</b></p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 2 / Issue 3 / February 2015 <b>ASEAN Development Goals:</b> Potentials and Lessons from the MDGs</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 2 / Issue 4 / April 2015 <b>Ensuring the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze's (AATHP) Effectiveness:</b> A Case Study of Riau Province's Haze Summary</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 2 / Issue 5 / July 2015 <b>Banking Integration in ASEAN:</b> Challenges and Issues</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 2 / Issue 6 / September 2015 <b>Finding a Durable Solution to Rohingya Refugee Crisis:</b> An Overview of Regional and Domestic Constraints</p>
<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>During the ASEAN Summit in December 2014, Indonesia, as the host, has been competing in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015. The Indonesian government is trying to improve its competitiveness towards the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the challenges and opportunities for Indonesia in the context of the AEC 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>The year 2015 will be the political, economic, and social year for ASEAN. The ASEAN Development Goals (ADGs) are a set of development goals that are similar to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the potentials and lessons from the MDGs in the context of the ADGs.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>Last year forest fire has had serious effects on the ASEAN region. In many cases, Indonesia has been the source of haze. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze (AATHP).</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>In order to support the ASEAN integration through the ASEAN Framework (AEC) is crucial. In this issue, the author discusses the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY/BRIEF</b></p> <p>The deteriorating conflict between the Rohingya Muslim minority and the military-backed Buddhist majority in Myanmar has led to unprecedented political and security implications in the ASEAN region. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the Rohingya refugee crisis.</p>

<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Special Volume, Issue 1/November 2015 <b>Achieving Food Security in ASEAN</b></p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 3 / Issue 1 / October 2015 <b>Militaryisation of the South China Sea:</b> Implications on ASEAN</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 3 / Issue 2 / November 2015 <b>Raising People's Awareness towards ASEAN:</b> Potentials and Recommendations</p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Vol. 3 / Issue 3 / January 2016 <b>ASEAN Community, Quo Vadis?</b></p>	<p><b>The Habibie Center ASEAN Studies Program ASEAN BRIEFS</b> Special Volume, Issue 2 / March 2016 <b>The Role of Civil Society in Countering Religious Extremism in Indonesia:</b> Lessons Learned from Indonesia</p>
<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary and food security needs." This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY/BRIEF</b></p> <p>Territorial disputes in the South China Sea have become a major issue for ASEAN. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the implications of the militaryisation of the South China Sea on ASEAN.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY/BRIEF</b></p> <p>At its inception, ASEAN was a political and economic organization of the people to support the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the potentials and recommendations for raising people's awareness towards ASEAN.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY/BRIEF</b></p> <p>2015 marks a new milestone in the ASEAN political security community. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the challenges and opportunities for ASEAN countries in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY/BRIEF</b></p> <p>In the wake of the attacks that hit the heart of Jakarta, the Indonesian capital as well as the home of the ASEAN Secretariat, earlier this year, people are reminded that the threat of terrorism and other forms of violence is still a reality in Southeast Asia. This issue of ASEAN BRIEFS focuses on the role of civil society in countering religious extremism in Indonesia.</p>