

**Notes for The 4th ERIA Editors Roundtable:
The ASEAN Community Post 2015 Vision**

Date: 4th December 2015
Venue: Eastin Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Opening Remarks

1. Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, President, ERIA:

Prof Nishimura started by thanking the Star Media Group for co-organising this roundtable, and commended Malaysia for an excellent job as the ASEAN chair in 2015 in championing ASEAN solidarity and the ASEAN way.

He introduced the various sessions of the roundtable, touching on the themes of each session and encouraged everyone to take the opportunity to learn more about issues and trends impacting on the ASEAN Community.

He also introduced a book that was provided to all participants, entitled “Framing the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Post 2015” and published by ERIA. This book explores the notion of ASEAN identity and contains views and recommendations to bring the ASEAN cooperation in the social and cultural area to the next level—especially issues related to education, disaster management, culture, and innovation.

For Prof Nishimura, the focus from now on be how the ASEAN members will fully implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. The next 10 years will be pivotal period for the ASEAN overall integration.

In this respect, the ERIA has been pinpointed as one of the strategic institutions essential in achieving the goals of AEC Blueprint 2025. The ERIA has been working very quietly to provide doable recommendations that were eventually included in the AEC Blueprint 2025. Over the past years, ERIA has conducted hundreds of serious studies on the ways and means to make ASEAN more economically integrated.

Prof Nishimura hoped that the Roundtable will raise awareness on the importance of ASEAN Community Post 2015 Vision and the future of ASEAN, and that with better understanding of the potential of ASEAN, the media participants can write more about ASEAN and strengthen the sense of belonging to ASEAN as a whole.

2. Mr Philip S. Golingai, Online Editor, Star Media Group (on behalf of Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai, Chief Editor of Star Publications):

Golingai expanded on a key initiative in Malaysia’s chairmanship of ASEAN which is the Global Movement of Moderates. This movement reaffirms the importance of moderation as an established ASEAN value which emphasises tolerance,

mutual understanding, dialogue, respect for diversity and inclusiveness towards achieving peace, security and harmony in the region.

Golingai explained how the Star Media Group launched its moderation campaign, which provided space for Malaysians to share their views on moderation and to stand up against extremism. He asserts that this has caused a shift towards public conversation where most Malaysians are now speaking up to support a more rational and open and non-divisive society.

Keynote Speech

Dato' Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Malaysia:

Dato' Seri Reezal Merican outlined that regional community-building and economic integration has been at the top of the agenda of Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2015.

The minister reiterated the pledge by the leaders of the ASEAN member states from the recent 27th ASEAN Summit in November to establish a single community. He quoted the Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Mohd Najib Razak in his speech in April that "A People-Centred ASEAN is one in which our citizens feel that they are not just part of ASEAN – but that they are ASEAN, and its future is their future."

He welcomed the progress of community building driven by the eight priorities for ASEAN outlined for 2015:

1. Establish the ASEAN Community
2. Develop the ASEAN Community's Post-2015 Vision
3. Steer ASEAN closer to its peoples
4. Strengthen the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region
5. Expand Intra-ASEAN trade and investments
6. Strengthen ASEAN's institutions
7. Promote regional peace and security through moderation
8. Enhance ASEAN's role as a global player

The minister rattled off a long list of statistics which demonstrate the burgeoning potential of ASEAN as well as the extent to which ASEAN has progressed over the years. Highlights include:

- GDP has nearly doubled since 2007
- By 2014, ASEAN is Asia's 3rd largest, the world's 7th largest market
- Consumer base of over 622 million, behind only China and India globally.
- Intra-ASEAN market is the largest for ASEAN trade at 24.1% in 2014.
- ASEAN accounts for 11% of total global foreign direct investment inflows in 2014 compared to 5% in 2007.
- ASEAN's intra-regional FDI inflows is the second largest by partner at 17.9%, second only to the EU.
- Estimated to become the 4th largest market after the US, EU and China by 2030.
- World's third biggest workforce.

He maintained his belief that as a region of tremendous opportunity, greater ASEAN integration and the creation of the ASEAN economic community will drive annual regional GDP growth from strength to strength.

He stated that Malaysia believes that the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 reflects the genuine desire of ASEAN member states to further consolidate and deepen the ASEAN community building and regional integration process.

He recognised that the member states are at different stages of development and thus asserted that in order to build a truly integrated ASEAN, inclusiveness and sustainability must be at the heart of policies going forward.

The minister insisted that it is entirely realistic for ASEAN to see itself as the “third force” in Asia, after India and China.

To cultivate this new sense of an ASEAN identity borne out of becoming a single community, the minister appealed to the media to raise awareness of what ASEAN is doing, and how the ongoing changes will benefit all.

Session One: The ASEAN Community Post 2015 Vission: All things considered

Chair: Ms. Yoko Fukushima, Anchorwoman, NHK

Panelist 1: Dr Ponciano S. Intal Jr., Senior Economist of ERIA:

Intal Jr made some reflections on the AEC and ASCC Blueprints 2025 via a series of slides. In outlining the context, achievements and challenges for ASEAN in implementing the AEC and ASCC Blueprints 2025, Intal Jr plainly put it that ASEAN had “no choice” but to become a much more integrated, open and connected community in order to respond to the challenges and opportunities of an emergent China and emerging India.

He asserted that the AEC Blueprint needs deeper implementation and wider coverage to support structural, policy, regulatory and institutional improvements for a rising ASEAN. A successful AEC rests in part on successful ASCC (and a peaceful ASEAN and Asia).

In tracing ASEAN’s progress, Intal Jr noted that ASEAN now has larger FDI inflows compared to China, and is one of the best performers in poverty reduction. Significant stides have been made in achieving universal primary education and promoting gender equality.

Looking at AEC progress, Intal Jr he noted how, among various measures that Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) rates were very low; National Single Window (NSW) was operational in the member states; ASEAN Trade In Goods Agreement (ATIGA) Rules of Origin (RoO) was business friendly; the establishment of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP); and there were liberal investment regimes in many ASEAN member states.

For progress on the ASCC, Intal Jr noted that there was strengthened commitment and coherence in policy frameworks in ASEAN for human development, social justice and human rights, social protection and welfare, environmental sustainability. Achievements included the Declaration on Non-Communicable Diseases in ASEAN and the Declaration on Elimination of Violence on Women and Elimination of Violence on Children in ASEAN.

There remained an array of challenges for ASEAN according to Intal Jr:

1. Large numbers of poor and marginally poor in most member states. Hunger was still a problem in a few member states. Millions do not have full primary education. Social protection remained a challenge
2. Mixed record on income inequality.
3. Need to improve competitiveness of ASEAN. Many member states had lower productivity growth compared to China.
4. Need to ensure a more resilient, equitable and sustainably growing ASEAN.
5. Building a fully functioning AEC and ASCC is unfinished. ASEAN largely an “institutional identity.” Need for making ASEN deeply felt and owned by ASEAN peoples.

To meet these challenges, Intal Jr detailed five key pathways:

1. Ensure a deeply integrated and contestable, pro-competition ASEAN economic community
2. Plug ASEAN deeply into the networked and innovative world future and ensure robust productivity growth
3. Engender greater inclusiveness, resiliency and sustainability in ASEAN member states' development process
4. Engender good regulatory practice, responsive and stakeholder-centric regulatory management systems with competent and coordinated institutions
5. Deepen regional cooperation and interconnectedness towards greater sense of ASEAN belongingness, commonality, identity and destiny.

For Intal Jr, the AEC Blueprint 2025 was almost like a concerted structural transformation plan for the member states. To achieve this blueprint, political capital is needed more than ever, as well as regional cooperation and coordination, for the AEC blueprint 2025 to be embraced by the ASEAN member states as their own.

To achieve the 'ASEAN Miracle' of high and equitable growth, Intal Jr set out one strong foundation, that being a responsive ASEAN, upon which four pillars rest:

1. Integrated and highly contestable ASEAN
2. Competitive and dynamic ASEAN
3. Inclusive and resilient ASEAN
4. Global ASEAN

For the first pillar, which Intal Jr regards as the most important with regards to the ASEAN economic community, he discussed in detail, elaborating on just what are the targets to achieve within this pillar as integral to the post-2015 agenda:

- Non-protective Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs)
- More efficient and seamless trade facilitation, including simplified and business-friendly Rules of Origin (RoOs)
- Highly contestable services and investment; effective competition policy
- Facilitative standards and conformance
- Financial integration, inclusion and stability
- Greater mobility of skilled labour

To deal with each of these issues, Intal Jr presented a clear, encompassing set of approaches:

- NTMs: GRP to minimize compliance cost; private sector support in prioritizing NTM streamlining; stringent criteria/sunset clause for trade protective NTMs
- Trade Facilitation: Expand/deepen ASW; operationalize effective NTR/ATR; AEO and self-certification; streamlined processes; stronger private sector collaboration and partnership
- Standards & Certification (S & C): Concerted programmes on technical capacity building; transparency measures on country-specific

- requirements; GRP on S & C rules, regulations & procedures; enhanced public private sector partnerships on S & C regime
- Skilled labour/business visitors: Expand/deepen MNP commitments; reduce documentation requirements; AQRF; MRAs

As he looked at the impact of improved trade facilitation on economic growth and intra-ASEAN trade, Intal Jr noted that actually a more liberalised service sector and a more efficient government will have even greater impact on intra-ASEAN trade than simple trade facilitation.

- To fully implement national and ASEAN single window is not easy, according to Intal Jr, and will take time. He listed a range of measures to achieve this:
- All government agencies should be integrated through one system
- Import/Export/Customs procedures should be simplified to reduce the number of documents required to export and import
- Digitalisation of back-office/support documentation, online payments
- Adoption of integrated risk management border controls to ensure cross-border compliance

He noted that NSW and ASW reduces regulatory burden and facilitates convergence in the member states.

Intal Jr then provided a modulated set of approaches on these issues:

- Services: Openness to revising existing flexibilities and other approaches to further services liberalization; disciplines on domestic regulations; regional cooperation on HRD, promotion for FDI
- Investment: Complete built-in agenda; identify mechanisms to phase out/reduce ACIA Reservation List
- Financial integration, inclusion and stability: Cohesive measures for AQIBs, insurance market integration and more connected capital market, in tandem with regulatory cohesiveness to reduce compliance cost while remaining prudent.

For the second pillar, Intal Jr elaborated on the issues ASEAN has to tackle in order to achieve an effective, innovative and dynamic ASEAN:

- Effective competition policy
- Consumer Protection
- Strengthened IPR Cooperation / Taxation Cooperation
- Productivity-Driven Growth, Innovation, R&D and Technology Commercialisation
- Good Governance, GRP and Responsive Regulations
- Sustainable Economic Development

Intal Jr notes that solving these issues will make the AEC Blueprint a more politically palatable one for the common people because much of this domestic reform.

He goes into detail to lay out the clear strategies in expanded range of measures/strategic areas:

- Productivity, Innovation, R&D: Partnerships among academia, research institutions, private sector; entrepreneurship and business incubation; hospitable intra-ASEAN policy environment for technology transfer, adaptation and innovation; strong IPR protection; nurture highly mobile creative people
- Governance, GRP, Responsive Regulations: Concerted regular review of processes for streamlining; institutionalised informed regulatory conversations; set targets and milestones in regulatory agenda
- Sustainable Economic Development: Framework for utilisation of efficient and low carbon technologies; biofuels use for transportation; enhanced energy connectivity

Intal Jr saw within the AEC Blueprint 2025 elements that emphasized two main points, which he elaborated in detail: the stronger role of the private sector and a stronger monitoring mechanism.

Commenting on the ASCC Blueprint 2025, he noted that it appeared more general than the AEC Blueprint 2025, as the former was initially agreed upon to be an “attendant document” rather than a blueprint. He saw the critical role of the Strategic Action Plan to operationalize strategic measures of the Blueprint. Intal Jr also noted that there was a strong emphasis on multisectoral engagement in implementation and on participative monitoring.

In conclusion, Intal Jr reiterated his point that political capital, regional cooperation and coordination was needed more than ever to ensure that the blueprints were credible and achievable.

Panelist 2: Dato’ Steven CM Wong, Deputy Chief Executive, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia:

Wong started by reflecting how his feelings for ASEAN has changed over the roughly 25 years he has been observing ASEAN: initially he was an unabashed idealist, then a vociferous critic. Today, he’s a neutral realist.

In his view, ASEAN “is what it is” – good at some things, like keeping a degree of regional peace, and not good at others. ASEAN is a very good organic community, facing challenges together like a village does. In terms of its functional capabilities, that’s where ASEAN has problems. We have to put up with the evolutionary speed of ASEAN, which is inching forward, seemingly without a care for the external pressures.

Many of the things ASEAN designs for itself, not so much in the economic field, but in the other areas like fundamental human rights and corruption, ASEAN is not very responsive.

He critiqued that the ASEAN blueprints for the lack of firmness in its action plans, targets and pathways: “we have not made any firm decision to proceed on a particular path, but we have agreed to look at these issues together.”

Wong notes that as a long-time observer, he is used to this, and he understands the limitations of ASEAN. Likewise he is used to the justifications that are constantly raised about ASEAN, that it is too diverse with different levels of development and interests. Wong wonders if these are mere smokescreens to hide the fact that, either the member states' leaders have very little interest in moving these things forward or they don't do so at all.

But in the political security area, there are some very core issues that affect life and human happiness, where these grand statements whether as smokescreen or otherwise, don't help. Core issues like fundamental human rights, the rule of law and combating corruption. Wong regards that anything that distracts from tackling these issues is a minus rather than a plus

Wong insists that such issues should not be soft-pedaled or deviated with more conferences etc. The more we delay this tackling these core issues, if they are not resolved in 10 years, we are doing ASEAN a great disservice.

Wong believes that ASEAN will be a burgeoning growth industry, with significant manpower requirements and resources, even if these resources are not necessarily channeled to central institutions, they will be channeled to national secretariats through the ASEAN member states.

Wong commended the drafters of the ASEAN social cultural community blueprint for doing a good job, for the decision to continue engaging with stakeholders, incorporating civil society. This gave him hope that there will be changes in the future due to the fact that there had been this active engagement with the stakeholders.

Wong felt that the reception of the ASEAN community and its three blueprints has been underwhelming.

He warned that certain countries in ASEAN wanted the ASEAN community to remain "soft and wishy-washy." They would not like to see an ASEAN community as encapsulated in the goals and targets – true economic community, real political security community – because "that would give them a harder time."

Thus, Wong cautions that if ASEAN moves forward at the same rate, whilst refusing to put in a "full-blooded approach" by 2025, what is remaining of ASEAN credibility and centrality will be further diluted."

He questions whether in 10 years time, can we see ourselves being safer, more secure, more prosperous, more engaged? Have we lifted our standards, our ability to be civilized? This talk of moderation – is it real and does it have chance of being real?

Panelist Responses to questions from the chair and the floor:

Dr Ponciano S. Intal Jr: Replying to the chair's question on the details of what will be implemented in the blueprints, Intal Jr said the priority is the first pillar. Trade facilitation is supposed to be implemented by 2016. For services, that will be done supposedly by 2017. If things do not push forward, then the idea would be to move towards the negative list. We do know the ideal one is the negative

list. There is a growing commitment for the services. The real crux is what are those targets, that's where the excitement is, because the pressure for stating specific target is really for 2016.

Dato' Steven CM Wong: Before answering the chair's question on upcoming challenges and obstacles for implementing the blueprint, Wong responded to Intal Jr's comments by clarifying that negative lists are not always a good thing – at the end of the day, it depends on whether you believe in liberalization. Wong also added that he agreed with Intal Jr that tariffs are passé, and now governments have moved on to playing this game of NTMs, where he sees a net increase in the stock of NTMs. Some NTMs can be taken down on a bilateral basis, but there are some NTMs which are not bilateral, like at the customs and ports. These things have a greater impact on how firms do business, the seamlessness of production networks. He asserted that if you tweak these numbers on NTMs, you could get a big boost to welfare. If you remove NTMs, not only will you get a big boost from additional market access, you get greater investment too. These things require a lot more effort. First we do the measures which are uniform throughout like the ASEAN Single Window. And then we have to move back to behind-the-border measures and work backwards. Countries that know these are barriers and these barriers are actually hampering or hindering their own ability to move forward, they can do this. At ASEAN we need to see across the board measures, as well as these NTMs being taken down.

Dr Ponciano S. Intal Jr: He wanted to add that Indonesia was an important variable in the success of ASEAN blueprint 2025. It was worrisome that there was uncertainty that Indonesia would really embrace the AEC blueprint.

Clearly AEC will not move forward without the largest economy and country. Intal Jr senses that as Indonesia projects itself to the world, its voice will be stronger if it becomes the leader of the ASEAN community. Intal Jr also feels Indonesia actually needs that blueprint. It's important for Indonesia to develop its manufacturing sector.

Dr Ponciano S. Intal Jr: Replying to a question from the floor on whether stakeholder engagement will help to lessen the democratic deficit in ASEAN, Intal Jr replied that if ASEAN is serious in engaging the various stakeholders more deeply then there's a greater sense of participation in the policy process. There are statements that stipulate that when they engage with the private sector, they need to ensure that the voice of the SMEs are also included.

Dato' Steven CM Wong: Replying to a question from the floor on whether there is an ASEAN response being studied to China's ambitions in the region, Wong said that there wasn't anything specifically referring to China's ambitions in the political security community blueprint. But he notes that there is repeated mentions of the "using peaceful means" in terms of maritime cooperation, as well as statements on maritime boundaries – which implicitly refers to this issue.

Wong adds that even within ASEAN there remains territorial disputes between member states, but ASEAN refuses to address them. In terms of addressing China, there first has to be a unified political community before ASEAN can interact with other countries. If ASEAN remains a very soft community without aims, this

will play right into the hands of some countries who would not like to see a strong ASEAN, and this will be worse for all of us collectively.

Comment from Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura, President, ERIA: He informed that ERIA is now developing a new NTM database for all ASEAN members states. It will be completed in January next year. The new database covers all regulations including all international conventions in effect by January 2015. The work is conducted by local think tanks in collaboration with government officers of the respective member states.

Session Two: The ASEAN Identity: Real or Imagined?

Chair: Ms Jeerawat Na Thalang, Sunday News Editor, The Bangkok Post

Panelist: Tan Sri Razali Ismail, Non-Executive Chairman, Global Movement of Moderates Foundation:

Tan Sri Razali first noted how there was a lack of interest in the Malaysian press to discuss global moderation. He would like to talk more to the press regarding this issue because there are still many ill-defined areas and how moderation can be applied to national precepts. It cannot be left to be determined by governments alone. Civil society has to play a very big part, and the press should make the bodies responsible for operationalising moderation are accountable.

He holds that ASEAN is a body that has yet to have rules applied to it in a very clear fashion. There are practices but not enough rules. ASEAN has developed in a different way (from the EU), in some ways unique to this area.

Tan Sri Razali looks to the history of Malacca in its heyday as a major port to point to a native sophistication in dealing with all cultures, including the Europeans and China. Imperialism destroyed this built-in ability to deal with all contingency. But he implores for ASEAN to draw on that native sophistication to deal with its problems.

He cites the early success of ASEAN to consolidate what was a very unstable area. He also cites the example of ASEAN's approach to Myanmar, that despite knowing what it was doing wrong, ASEAN supported Myanmar and helped them into the UN.

He feels that while ASEAN's purpose is rather amorphous, but at least there is a sense of purpose, that is beginning to form a kind of regional coherence.

Tan Sri Razali also points to the diversity of ASEAN, a big tapestry with many ethnic groups, different religions and different levels of economic progress. He cautions that if the economic consolidation of ASEAN has to be based on some kind of economic homogenisation, there will be a lot of losers among the ethnic groups. These are questions governments alone shouldn't be allowed to answer. The press and civil society must get into it.

He sees ASEAN as a motley crew, one which the respective governments have accepted. But he believes that there will be a process of evolution, with increasing social redress, and social equality. He implores for civil society to play its role in engaging in this process. We have to find an equation for an understanding to bring about change in many parts of ASEAN. But change must not be derived from pressure from the EU or US.

Tan Sri Razali mentioned that this year's ASEAN Summit asked the Global Movement of Moderates to operationalize the principles of moderation in ASEAN, and to eventually take this message to the UN. But even within ASEAN, Tan Sri Razali recognises that this is a huge enterprise. The mandate is clear – to create a situation in ASEAN where there will be revulsion and abhorrence of violent extremism, but in context of marginalisation in ASEAN, this will be difficult.

He cites the difficulty in persuading some ethnic groups in Myanmar to come to terms with its central government, give up their arms, and trust what they have not been able to do for decades. He recognises that there are aspects of extremism that are related to the needs of the people there.

Therefore he asserts that the active support of civil society is necessary to operationalise moderation. It must somehow be embedded into the way we do things.

Panelist: Mr Meidyatama Suriyodiningrat, Editor-in-Chief of the Jakarta Post:

In tackling the issue of ASEAN identity, Suriyodiningrat first defined identity as being both created internally and reinforced by perception externally. We can say as much as we want, but how people see us is as important.

He notes that the ASEAN Vision 2020 declaration in Kuala Lumpur in 1997, quoting the bit that says “bound by a common regional identity.”

He does not necessarily believe that just because we have common interest, it doesn’t mean you have a common identity. Common interest does not mean common values. Proximity does not necessarily mean community.

Suriyodiningrat also does not agree that the ‘ASEAN way’ is our identity – the ASEAN way is a tool of political convenience at the time but not the ASEAN identity.

He posed the question – How many would agree to the statement that “If ASEAN did not exist, it would make no difference to my life.”

He cited a study conducted by the ASEAN Foundation, which was conducted among the youth, and found that 52% agreed with that statement.

Meanwhile in the ASEAN social cultural community blueprint 2009, there was a survey where most respondent said yes when asked if they were an ASEAN citizen. Suriyodiningrat noted that this approach of questioning did not identify itself as an ASEAN citizen in the same way the Europeans would identify themselves with Europe.

He then compared ASEAN with Europe. He recognised it was easier for Europe to forge a regional identity because firstly they actually had a common history, and secondly they had common political values.

Suriyodiningrat remembers during the time when Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam was about to join ASEAN in 1996-1997. He cited how the foreign ministers of the ASEAN member states then saying that these countries had fulfilled all the economic and organizational requirements. But when asked on political issues, the line that the leaders took was that no organisation in the world requires democracy or any other political system as part of their membership.

Suriyodiningrat then looked at the EU's Copenhagen Principles on how certain countries can be part of the EU, it spelled out that such countries should have institutions which guarantee:

1. Democracy
2. Rule of law
3. Human Rights
4. Respect and Protection of Minorities
5. Functioning Market Economy
6. Accepts the obligations and intent of the EU

Values are what defines us as an identity. Our values shape our identity and shape the choices we make.

Suriyodiningrat then made proposals on how to move forward:

1. Must give expression to the political aspirations of the people in line with the principle that sovereignty in the contemporary era rests with the people
2. Stop framing political challenges as economic ones, which only masks and complicates the real nature of the problem

To achieve this, Suriyodiningrat offers the following specific suggestions:

1. Strengthen the ASEAN intergovernmental commission on human rights (AIHCR)
2. Stop meddling in the ASEAN Foundation
3. Make the ASEAN secretariat independent with a merit-based secretary-general.
4. Connectivity and media engagement

Panelist: Mr. Raman Narayanan, Envy-R Communication:

Narayanan saw identity as dependent on context and environment. The problem with ASEAN in terms of identity has been that ASEAN has done a relatively decent job as a hard power on political and economic issues, but not on soft power issues of identity.

It could be due to the way ASEAN has been structured. It began as a declaration of nation states. In 2007 it became a rules-based organisation with the ASEAN charter, and today it proclaims itself as a community. But what defines as a community?

Narayanan believes that the history of the ASEAN region is one of a region of empires, but unlike Europe, we did not engage in sectarian strife and territorial struggles. We were a region dealing in commerce, usually maritime commerce, and with commerce we have travel and intermarriages.

But ASEAN has not decided to seize on this history. Because identities are ultimately formed, not just through shared experiences and aspirations but also the narratives that frames them. ASEAN has not done enough to frame the

narratives, in order to more deeply inculcate an ASEAN ethos in the region, and to nurture the blossoming of this identity. So far it's been about national interest, and security issues, but not about the people. Narayanan believes ASEAN has become a very elitist organisation

He feels that to build an identity, you have to build a brand, and he believes ASEAN has done very little in this respect.

The whole formation of ASEAN was to bring in a whole new term, to send out a powerful signal that after 500 years of colonial rule, the people of this region are taking control of their own destinies. That's what ASEAN stands for, but that's not been articulated very well.

Narayanan asserts that the decisions are being made by an older generation on what kind of ASEAN is going to be inherited by the younger generation, without consulting this latter group.

He recommended appealing to the younger generation via entertainment and sports – for eg an ASEAN music festival or an ASEAN football league.

Narayanan insists that there is need to change the mindset of the ASEAN governments. You cannot overcome challenges in the digital era with an analogue mindset. This new mindset needs to transcend the national and embrace the regional.

Comments and Panelist Responses to questions from the floor:

Participant's (unidentified) comment: There are three aspects regarding this issue:

Willingness – does ASEAN want to have a common identity? My answer is yes, we can see now that it's not just market-driven forces behind ASEAN integration but also political, to push forward regional integration. If you go to the media and the public, you'll find the mainstream voice is quite ASEAN friendly, even ASEAN-favourable.

Capability – does ASEAN have the capability to build up a common identity? Yes, and this capability will be stronger, along with the process of regional integration. My optimism comes from ASEAN's achievements over the past few decades. Today we have this real ASEAN econ community, we also have progress in social and cultural, and political and security dimensions.

Acceptance – Do other countries recognise ASEAN as a rule? Yes, there are many examples where ASEAN as a group is at the centre of political framework, it's the de facto functional centre to push for broader regional integration.

Mr. Raman Narayanan: Replying to the question on whether ASEAN is being recognised as a region globally, Narayanan believes that ASEAN is recognised, but this question only emphasises that while the world deals with this region as one, our own people don't. He notes how the concept of moving towards an ASEAN community is a case of ASEAN going back to the future. We were

moderate and tolerant at a time when Europe was tearing itself apart over religion. Moderation is in our history, but we're not emphasizing this enough in our narrative.

Narayanan states that while ASEAN's blueprints are idealistic, far-reaching and all-encompassing, in today's world you're not measured by your blueprints. He holds that ASEAN's core values and principles are ones we all share, but question is whether these are being attended to rather than merely national interests.

Tan Sri Razali Ismail: He's not too fixated by ASEAN identity, because he believes we already have one. As long as we're successful, we are able to do the things and all the people benefit from what the governments have done, then we will have an identity. Organisations can come and go, so if we're not seen to be relevant to the world, to the needs of the region, and if there are clear signs of people of some parts of ASEAN that reject it, then our identity will be affected.

On moderation, we have been able to do quite well to deal with aspects of foreign policy and understanding to a great extent the limits of national interests amongst ASEAN countries. We are in a position to try to deal with principles of moderation. The word moderation has become very credible elsewhere also although they are not properly defined. We can bring this into effect in ASEAN, slowly the concept of governance will take into account an understanding of what are the limits that countries should apply in terms of their interests and ambitions and how they treat their people.

Mr Meidyatama Suriyodiningrat: ASEAN in 1967, the Association of Southeast Authoritarian Nations – that's what it was, in 1967. These authoritarian leaders decided to come together, let's not bother each other, let's consolidate our power so we can build our economy, and continue to be in power for another 30 years. There were other geo-strategic interests too, but if you look into the history, that's why they came together – let's keep the peace in an area that has no history of cooperation, and let's get along so we can survive. And it stopped there.

Suriyodiningrat noted how from 1967 until 1976, the ASEAN leaders did not meet at all. Now since 2007-2008, there has been average of two summits a year. Yet from 1967 to 2000, there had only been six summits. Then around 2003, they decided to move forward.

Suriyodiningrat pointed this out to say that if the establishment of ASEAN was just to keep the peace and allow each other to develop and consolidate their own power and economy, then there was no identity.

Then the leaders found confidence and wanted it to be more than it was. But Suriyodiningrat felt that if they just stopped at forming a common market, then all this talk about identity would be moot. But suddenly know we want to be a political community, a social cultural community, which really doesn't fit to what ASEAN was before.

Thus Suriyodiningrat stresses his earlier point of identity being shared values – ASEAN for him was not formed on identity, but formed on interests. Now we are

punching above our weight. We were never meant to be a political community of sorts, we were just meant to be a common market. And then suddenly we want to be bigger than what we are, which is great, but we have not done the groundwork.

Session Three: Dialogue with ASEAN Secretary-General Le Luong Minh

Moderator: Prof. Hidetoshi Nishimura

Le Luong Minh, ASEAN Secretary-General:

Le heralded the two declarations signed at the recent 27th ASEAN Summit as a historic development in ASEAN community building. The formal establishment of the ASEAN Community is also the realisation of the vision articulated eight years ago in 2007 by ASEAN Leaders for the regional grouping to achieve community status by 2015.

He reports that the overall implementation of the three Community Blueprints stands at 97.6%, with 100% for the ASEAN Political and Security Community;; 92.7% for the ASEAN Economic Community; and 100% for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. While the remaining APSC measures will be addressed by the end of the year, the outstanding key AEC measures will be prioritised under the post-2015 agenda for completion by the end of 2016. Those action lines that are of a continuing nature have also been carried forward to the new Blueprints.

The ASEAN 2025 Document charts the path for ASEAN Community building and articulates ASEAN goals and aspirations as the regional grouping enters the next phase of consolidation. ASEAN is working towards a Community that is “politically cohesive, economically integrated, and socially responsible”.

Le cites how after seven years of implementation of the APSC Blueprint (2009-2015), ASEAN political and security cooperation has deepened and expanded, leading to a strengthening of ASEAN capacity in responding to regional and international challenges, cementing the foundation of the APSC by 2015.

He explained that the objective of the new APSC Blueprint 2025 is to elevate the political-security cooperation to realise a rules-based, inclusive and resilient community in which ASEAN peoples enjoy human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice, embrace the values of tolerance and moderation and uphold ASEAN fundamental principles, shared values and norms as well as live in a safe and secure environment with enhanced capacity to respond comprehensively and effectively to existing and emerging challenges.

ASEAN shall remain cohesive, responsive and relevant in addressing challenges to regional peace and security as well as play a central role in shaping the evolving regional architecture, while deepening its engagement with external parties and contributing collectively to global peace, security and stability.

Le also insists that while the implementation of the AEC Blueprint 2015 has put in place the requisite frameworks and fundamentals for the region to operate effectively as an ASEAN Economic Community, regional commitments will need to be followed through, institutions strengthened, resource mobilised, with support and buy-in including at the national level.

The AEC post-2015 agenda will build upon the significant advances made and address remaining measures under the existing AEC Blueprint.

The AEC vision for 2016-2025 aims to build an integrated and highly cohesive economy, a competitive, innovative and dynamic ASEAN, a resilient, inclusive and people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN, enhanced sectoral integration and cooperation, and a global ASEAN. There will be enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation and a more resilient, inclusive, and people-oriented, people-centred community, integrated with the global economy.

The Secretary-General assures that at the heart of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) is the commitment to lift the quality of life of its peoples through cooperative activities that are people-oriented, people-centred, environmentally friendly, and geared towards the promotion of sustainable development.

The ASCC envisions for an ASEAN Community that engages and benefits the peoples and is inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic in which the peoples of ASEAN participate in ASEAN processes, enjoy higher quality of life and equitable access to opportunities, live in a sustainable environment, with enhanced capacity to adapt and respond to threats and challenges, as well as innovate and proactively contribute to the global community.

Le sees ASEAN community building as a continuous and forward-looking process to strengthen the ASEAN Community based on the political-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars to forge ahead together.

In order to realize the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, it is important to enhance institutional capacity through improved ASEAN work processes and coordination, increased effectiveness and efficiency in the work of ASEAN Organs and Bodies, including a strengthened ASEAN Secretariat. It is also crucial to increase more regional collaboration and cooperation by investing resources and aligning national legislations for the effective implementation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

He also makes it clear that continuous efforts will also be undertaken to pursue equitable and inclusive growth and to foster greater awareness and participation of all stakeholders so that all ASEAN peoples can seize the opportunities and reap the benefits of a prosperous ASEAN Community.

Responses to questions from the moderator and the floor:

Le Luong Minh, ASEAN Secretary-General: He mentions the three community blueprints, which have nearly been completely implemented, but many measures still have to be carried over to be included in the 2025 Vision. That's a challenge for ASEAN to finish the implementation of the economic measures, which is the most difficult.

In the process of implementing the ASEAN economic community measures and the ASEAN Vision 2025 blueprint, one of the challenges is the transposition of the regional commitment and agreement into national strategies. The homogenisation of national legislation and regulations is also a challenge, to implement the measures for further integration.

Le insists that this is very often not due to the lack of political will but the lack of physical capacity, financial and human resources to implement those agreements. So the challenge is to mobilise enough resources, human, financial and otherwise for the implementation of those commitments and agreements.

On the South China Sea dispute with China, he commented that it was urgent for ASEAN to agree with China to decide on the code of conduct. This code of conduct must be a legally binding instrument, capable of preventing and managing incidents of the type taking place in South China Sea so we can ensure a stable situation conducive to our effective implementation of Vision 2025.

There is an agreement on the list of commonalities and also an agreement to start the process of negotiations, but we haven't been able to get an agreement on a timeline. It's urgent that ASEAN can get China engaged in a substantive process to agree on the elements of the code of conduct, including the sensitive elements.

On the question of adopting a common approach to issues related to IS (Islamic State), the Secretary-General says that terrorism is high on the ASEAN agenda. ASEAN countries are all parties to the UN Convention on Counter-Terrorism, and party to the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism.

Le reminded that at the 2007 ASEAN summit, the leaders had resolved to fight terrorism, and extremism. The leaders had also pointed out that a military solution is not enough to put an end to terrorism, and there was a need to focus on fighting and eliminating the root cause of terrorism, so the spirit of cooperation has been promoted. Malaysia as the author of the ASEAN resolution on the moderation movement has been important.

In this regard, Le noted the importance of sharing information among the intelligence agencies of the ASEAN member states and other countries.

As Laos assumes the chairmanship, Le sees a long list of tasks on the agenda in 2016. Highlights include: The implementation of the strategic measures for the new blueprints for the three communities; ASEAN has to develop a concrete roadmap and also coordinate the remaining measures from the AEC 2015 blueprint; The resumption of negotiations between ASEAN and the EU for the FTA; preparation for the new global climate change agreement, expected to be completed at the upcoming Paris Conference; efforts ensuring the realisation of the principle of mobilising people to participate in the ASEAN processes and implementation of the ASEAN community; the process of engaging China in consultations and negotiations of the code of conduct.

Regarding the proposal to reduce the number of ASEAN summits, Le feels that there will be difficulty because the ASEAN charter stipulate that two summits a year. Pending any decision on that matter, the leaders of ASEAN have agreed on a temporary arrangement, whereby Laos will organise two summits held back-to-back, which is on schedule for September 2016.

On the question of the implementing the action plans, Le asserts that many of the measures contained in the 2015 blueprint 2015 will have to be carried over to Vision 2025. But ASEAN community building is a process, a work in progress. The measures for the new vision 2025 are also moving in the same direction. Except for the new phase of the community consolidation, Le says ASEAN has gone beyond the 2nd generation of integration – the 1st one being between governments, the 2nd one between businesses, and the 3rd one people to people.

Le elaborates that ASEAN has set out 5 priorities for the next 10 years. The first is for a people-centred, people-oriented community. The second is the homogenisation of legislation and aligning of national processes, regulations, and legislations with regional agreements. The third is the need to enhance institutional capacities to ensure effectiveness. The fourth is to effectively respond to emerging challenges like disasters, epidemics, climate change consequences. The fifth is focused on ASEAN centrality, in the context of dealing with the global powers.

Responding to a question on whether ASEAN can harmonise multiple approaches to further economic liberalization, the Secretary-General replied that we do have ASEAN agreements with ASEAN's partners China, South Korea, India, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong and the EU. We also have agreements between a number of ASEAN countries, like the four ASEAN countries have concluded the TPPA; and we do have such agreements between individual ASEAN countries and other countries, like Vietnam and the EU.

We take all these as building blocks for ASEAN regional integration, and consider these as building blocks for integration into the global system under the WTO framework, so we don't see any contradiction or any deviation from the formal process of ASEAN integration.

On the question of ASEAN identity, Le notes how ASEAN diversity is part of every aspect of ASEAN life. ASEAN is perhaps the only regional organization that has been able to turn this diversity into an advantage rather than disadvantage. The most prominent features of ASEAN is it's unity in diversity. The ASEAN foundation can play an important role in developing ideas and measures on how we can promote this ASEAN identity. Le doesn't see any difficulty in allowing the ASEAN foundation to work independently. They have the governing board, but they have also the duty to report to ASEAN leaders on the work of the ASEAN foundation. But I do not have any role in intervening in the ASEAN Foundation.

On the question that reports saying that Laos won't host the ASEAN Civil Society Conference next year, Le responded that the work programme for 2016 has yet to be discussed.

Responding to a question on tackling the haze issue, the Secretary-General replied that ASEAN has agreed on developing a roadmap towards a haze-free ASEAN by 2020, and Thailand will be leading this process.

Responding to questions regarding a move to survey the people of ASEAN what they want from ASEAN, as well as moves to promote freedom of speech, Le cited that the last survey ASEAN did was in 2012, where up to 81% of respondents

said they only heard about ASEAN but didn't understand what the community was about. In 2014, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Communication Master Plan. By 31st December this year we shall be publishing a special news magazine on the ASEAN community, which will be published in all ASEAN members states. In 2016 we're planning a weekly 30mins TV programme to be broadcast in all ASEAN countries. These are what we're trying to accomplish to promote awareness people of the ASEAN community, and the opportunities and also challenges with ASEAN cooperation.

Session Four: Role of Media: Promoting Moderation in the EAS Members

Chair: Mr Tay Tian Yan, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Sin Chew Daily

Panelist: Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai, Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Star Media Group:

Wong spoke about his organisation's moderation campaign in the face of rising intolerance and extremist views in Malaysia. He detailed how his organization wanted to emphasise on commonalities, (that) all races and religions believe in compassion, tolerance, fighting against extreme views, terrorism. He elaborated on how this campaign was brought to universities and colleges, and how this was also used as a marketing tool to promote his organisation.

Wong remarked that the results were fantastic, with readers writing in to The Star daily newspaper to commend its efforts, and how the campaign grew the paper's subscriber base. He noted that generally Malaysians felt that they had had enough of extreme views.

However this campaign also had its backlash, with a law suit against himself by a Malay right-wing group and hate-mail and threats from religious extremists. He also noted how it was a difficult campaign to sustain.

The newspaper and its columnists, which included very vocal Muslims, were openly declaring itself as liberal and believing in a plural society. But Wong also saw that the biggest task was being critical against your own community – he cited how he has spoken up against Chinese extremists. He wished that other media organisations would join forces.

At the ASEAN level, he expressed concerns with what was happening with regards to the conflict in South Thailand and the massacres in Myanmar. Every country in ASEAN has its hotspots. He noted how Malaysian and Indonesians have got together to form groups supporting IS (Islamic State). Hence the moderation campaign shouldn't just apply to your own people.

Panelist: Ms. Gwen Robinson, Chief Editor, Nikkei Asian Reviews:

Robinson first touched on the concept of moderation, which she felt lacked definition and publicity, as it was still new to the world. She advocated that the message of moderation should be more clearly defined.

Moderation by definition is more a passive form of action, so she recognised that it was difficult to create action plans. But broadly, she took the point that it was about governments assuming a voice of reasonable responsibility.

Robinson also shared her experience in covering stories of massacres in Myanmar and how the media had a collective responsibility to not propagate hate speech and incite violence. She saw how the explosion of social media in places like Myanmar also resulted in a lot of hate speech and incitement of violence pouring through social media.

Added to that was how IS has been staging a global campaign over the internet, appealing to young and disaffected Muslims around the world. Robinson felt that ASEAN had to discuss this more, as it required more collective action.

Without wanting to see freedom of speech further restrained, Robinson nevertheless recognised the need for some sort of check and balance on social media.

Regarding the refugee situation in ASEAN, she noted that it was a continuing concern, and there should be a lot more focus how to enact ideas for solutions, adding to this the whole concept of moderation, as well as the concept of aftercare and preventive diplomacy.

Panelist: Ms Yulismartono, Publisher of Tempo English:

Yulismartono expressed her admiration for Malaysians for organising the moderation campaign, which she felt was necessary to be done in her country, Indonesia. Unfortunately it was difficult to explain moderation in Indonesia, what more when there was not a native translation for the word in Bahasa Indonesia.

She traced the rise of religious extremism in Indonesia from repressive treatment of conservative and radical Muslims during Suharto's rule, and the escalation of Islamic extremism after the fall of Suharto.

When Suharto left and reformed, there was freedom of speech, which was good for democracy, but the platform to speak out freely was also used by extremists. They began to form small group of extremist Muslims, in schools, offices, because they were able to speak out. She remarked how now Indonesia had had all kinds of Muslims – moderates, liberals, and very extremists.

Yulismartono also mentioned how the two largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia, Nadhatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah, both moderate, were confused and hesitated to make a stand when the first incidences of religious terrorism occurred. No one spoke up for moderate Islam for a long time, she said.

The growth of IS has created the very strong and realistic fear of young Indonesians joining IS and coming back to sow the seeds of extremism. Yulismartono also noted that the trend in Indonesia was that the real motivators of such extremist Islam came from the women in the villages.

The current Indonesian government has taken a firmer stance, with a very progressive religious minister speaking up about creating a moderate brand of Islam. This has given rise to the notion of Islam Nusantara, an archipelagic concept that identifies the Indonesian Muslims with the diverse multi-cultural history of Indonesia.

The Indonesian media has been supportive of the government on this issue, publishing articles related to Islam Nusantara. She also reported of regular

interfaith meetings and even of a pesantren – Islamic school – which accept Christian children.

However Yulismartono was worried about the wild and uncontrollable online and social media, used by extremists as well as moderates and liberals. There has not been effective regulation to control such media. At best, the police have been penalising hate speech, including defamation. Which is not the same thing.

She remarked that there was still a long way to go in order to make freedom of speech accountable. Social media is where the danger is. Because everybody has the handphone. because of false news in the media, conflict between two groups of religions have been incited to become very fatal and bloody fights.

Panelist: Mr Syed Nazakat, Editor-in-Chief, Centre for Investigative Journalism:

Nazakat shared his own experience covering conflict areas in Kashmir and the Middle East to remind journalists of their role in building society, holding governments accountable, making sure that the people are not misled, and to constantly take the pulse of the people.

He cited how the conflict in Kashmir has left roughly 90,000 dead to date, and yet because the regional papers in South Asia are under-reporting this issue, the general public is unaware of the real problems, and are apathetic of Kashmir.

Nazakat also gave an example on how dialogue and debate can counter religious extremism. Saudi Arabia had taken back 3,200 of their own people who were interned at Guantanamo Bay, suspected of being involved in terrorism. Saudi Arabia put them in a 5-star facility outside Riyadh where one-by-one they went through workshops and asked to debate their extremist beliefs with five of the best Islamic scholars.

Nazakat noted how out of the 3,200, 3,196 was deemed to be fit to return to normal life. He believes that for IS, the biggest fear is debate and discussion.

He saw the media's role was firstly to make sure things are reported, and secondly to make sure that their reports do not become part of the propaganda.

The problems of terrorism and religious extremism are multinational, but journalists are increasingly limited in their capacity to report on such a wide scope. Nazakat says that we need journalists and reporters who are able to connect these dots. Unfortunately news organisations no longer such resources, and journalists are not well-equipped.

Panelist: Don Pathan, Freelance Journalist, Pattani Forum:

Pathan gave his take on what he saw as a great misunderstanding of the southern Thailand conflict, brought about by a mainstream Thai media too quick to accept the government line, and the Thai national narrative that excluded the

Patani people in the south Thailand. He noted how the Thai Media had a very slanted view of the conflict.

The biggest misunderstanding of the conflict was that it was religious in nature, when it is not. Pathan saw it as really a conflict between the Patani Malay narrative against the Thai state narrative.

The Thai government used a two-pronged approach to tackle the problem – development and military action – but neither worked.

However, Pathan felt that whilst development (or the lack of) was not a cause of the conflict, it can be the solution. Development in his sense meant social mobility, autonomy, and not necessarily just purely economic. He felt that it was necessary to create greater social space for the Patani Malay, and to expand the Thai national narrative – which is dominantly a Siamese construct – to include the Malays.

Nevertheless, Pathan asserts that the Thai state does not recognise this expanded narrative. And with this wave of violence, where more than 6,500 have been killed, the government has to go beyond expanding the narrative to tackle this problem. He suggests measures like affirmative action to increase social mobility.

He remarked how the Thai media treated this issue as a crime story, not as a conflict. When you treat this as crime, it creates a situation where the higher death count, the bigger the headline, whereas this not representative of the issue.

Pathan explained how the people who are part of this process, don't really have command and control on the ground. The ones who do, have not surfaced. And they won't until they have legal protection or immunity. The problem is that the Thai government still has a very zero sum game mentality with outsiders – they don't want foreign NGOs coming in to help in capacity building.

Panelist Responses to questions from the floor:

Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai: Responding to a question on whether ASEAN should have a motto for celebrating unity in diversity, Wong wholeheartedly agreed with this suggestion. He pointed out the Malaysian Tourism Ministry promotes multi-ethnic pluralism as an attraction. But he also noted how there were groups in Malaysia who did not want to recognize pluralism. Advocates for moderation would counter and challenge such groups.

Don Pathan: On the issue of misreporting or not reporting fully, Pathan described how there are groups of monks in Thailand now calling for Buddhism to be the state religion, and they cite the insurgency in the south for this call, even though the issue is ethno-nationalist in nature, not religious. More accurate reporting and critical thinking would help to clear the air.

He also added that the government could work on the language policy. Patani was one of the few places in the world that still use Jawi, and Pathan saw that as

something to be cherished. The state would win hearts and minds if it promotes that, but it doesn't, because the Thai nation-state construct can be very ethno-centric. And the state doesn't seem to understand that the strong local Patani-Malay identity is the very thing that guards against exploitation by external groups. He noted how groups like Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah have tried to exploit the violence there, but they all came out empty-handed due to the strong local identity.

Participant's (unidentified) comment: Having covered Burma for the last 25 years, the issue in Burma has been pretty clear in the past, very black and white between the good guy and bad guy. We never had any trouble in the way we would vote. When Burma was a closed country, we always depended on the monasteries – they were places where everybody gathered and that's how we got information throughout the country. Then after Burma became more open after 2010, troubles like the religious conflict between Buddhist group start to crop up. Some Buddhist monks who had been giving us information over the last 20 years started getting angry with us, because sometimes we do not report about what they're preaching.

A lot of this violence and conflict, is not just based on extremism or religious differences. There are powerful groups or even government, who want us to be divided. For eg the violence in Mandalay, it was well-organised, the crowds were not from the town coming in to create violence, even though they were wearing Buddhist robes, but they all had walkie-talkies with someone giving them instructions. The media has a big responsibility to pinpoint who are these powerful groups.