

*Rodolfo Severino, Head of the ASEAN Studies Centre, attended, upon invitation, a "trilateral practitioners workshop" on "Creative Destruction: Toward an Effective International System" in Berlin in early July 2011.*

The workshop was organised by the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany and the Pacific Forum of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies of the United States. The Pacific Forum has its headquarters in Honolulu, while the Bertelsmann Foundation has an office in Washington, D. C.

Together with James Hoge, chairman of Human Rights Watch and former editor of the journal Foreign Affairs, and Prof. Dr. Eberhard Sandschneider, director of the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations, Severino was one of the elder participants in the workshop, most of the others being young policy-makers or academics.

In his interventions, Severino made the following points:

1. The world continues to be state-centred, with no global government. International agreements depend on voluntary compliance and are the result of compromises between national positions driven by national, regime or rulers' personal interests. Decisions by states are influenced by business sectors and individual firms and by civic organisations, but the degree of this influence varies widely and depends in large measure on the political system of the country concerned.
2. Current global threats constitute scarcity of resources, including competition for sources of water and energy, the degradation of the environment, possible political and/or disruption in China, and the China-US rivalry.
3. Despite its current problems, Japan remains a formidable force on the East Asian and global scene.

4. The trilateral workshop is inherently asymmetrical, with the US as one country, the EU as a group of countries striving to speak with one voice, and Asia as a collection of sovereign states of indeterminate composition.