

ASEAN LECTURE SERIES

THE 17TH ASEAN LECTURE RCEP: Progress, Outstanding Issues and Outlook

Date : 8 June 2018 (Friday)
Time : 10.00 am – 11.30 am
Venue : ISEAS Seminar Rooms 1 & 2

About the Lecture

The 16 participating countries of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) held their 22nd round of negotiations in Singapore from 28 April to 8 May 2018. While not much information on the RCEP negotiations is available publicly, there are reports that a number of chapters have been completed. However, chapters on the larger issues of market access, investment, intellectual property rights, e-commerce and others are still far from completion. The diverse set of countries involved, each with their own interests in the mega trade deal is one reason for the prolonged the negotiation. Nonetheless, there is expectation that countries will resolve their differences and complete the negotiation later this year. If it happens, RCEP will be viewed as a bright spot for multilateralism and free trade in an environment of rising protectionism in the West and small pockets around the world. Moreover, concluding the RCEP negotiations will be a positive reflection of ASEAN centrality. The Lecture will discuss how far the negotiations have progressed and the remaining challenges. What are the possible alternatives if RCEP were to meet with a similar fate as the WTO Doha Round, which was stalled by prolonged negotiations over the course of 14 years?

About the Speaker



Ms Anna Robeniol is Assistant Secretary for the Industry Development and Trade Policy Group of the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM) Chair for the Philippines. She is the Philippine Lead for RCEP trade negotiations as well as Co-Chair for the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Ms Robeniol has vast experience in international trade policy and negotiations, chiefly in ASEAN Economic Integration. She spent 13 years with the Department's Bureau of International Trade Relations wherein she formulated Philippine positions on various issues discussed in ASEAN, provided support to the Philippine delegation to high-level ASEAN meetings, and represented the country in a number of technical-level ASEAN meetings. Prior to this, she served as an Assistant Director of the ASEAN Secretariat and a Lead for the Trade and Investment component of the USAID Trade-Related Assistance for Development Project for the Philippines. Ms Robeniol earned her Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines and studied International Relations and Development at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, the Netherlands. She has a Master's degree in Public Management from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, and from Harvard Kennedy School at the Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.