

35TH ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

THE COVID-19 CRISIS: IMPACT ON ASEAN AND THE WAY FORWARD

21 - 23 October 2020

ABOUT THE 35TH ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

The region is confronting one of the most difficult challenges since World War II. Southeast Asian countries are fighting multiple challenges ranging from immediate emergency healthcare responses, managing Covid-19 information and disinformation, getting in the race to obtain vaccines, keeping global trade and supply chains open, maintaining ASEAN's relevance in the rapidly changing world order and finding ways to advance the multilateral agenda in the face of a global leadership vacuum. The theme of this year's Roundtable is: *The Covid-19 Crisis: Impact on ASEAN and the Way Forward*. The aim is to take a deeper, analytical look at the impact and implications of the current Covid-19 pandemic outbreak on ASEAN as a region. With an eye on the short- to mid-term, speakers will examine pressing issues facing ASEAN governments and societies alike as they attempt to recover from the crisis. The annual ASEAN Roundtable provides a forum for leading scholars and commentators to examine key issues and challenges affecting ASEAN as a region and as a regional organisation. The event is supported by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Supported by

DAY 1 – FIRST SESSION (Wednesday, 21 October 2020)

10.00 am – 10.15 am

OPENING REMARKS

Mr CHOI Shing Kwok
Director, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Mr Christian ECHLE
Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

10.15 am – 10.30 am

KEYNOTE MESSAGE

Dr Koh Poh Koon
Senior Minister of State
Ministry of Health

10.30 am – 12 pm

SESSION I: COVID-19'S MULTI-FACETED CHALLENGES IN ASEAN

Covid-19 has tested ASEAN governments' responsiveness in crisis management. The first session of the Roundtable will discuss ASEAN multiple institutional arrangements to manage policy response to the pandemic; whether ASEAN's multilateralism framework is impactful during the crisis; whether ASEAN governments have been adequate in handling the health emergency; how ASEAN should strengthen its health cooperation through the promotion of 'vaccine multilateralism'; how the dynamics of each individual country's responses shapes regional action; and to what extent the crisis has intensified government responses to combat fake news domestically. As ASEAN governments face unprecedented challenges, the pandemic has revealed gaps in government coordination, preparation and response capacity, and transparency and accountability in policy-making. These gaps have prompted ASEAN governments to introduce quick responses and fixes which need to be assessed.

Moderator: Ms Moe THUZAR
Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **ASEAN's Vaccine Multilateralism**

Prof Mely CABALLERO-ANTHONY
Professor, The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies
(RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

ASEAN's Governance Approach to Health Emergency

Dr Jonatan LASSA
Senior Lecturer, Charles Darwin University

Managing Fake News Under the Covid-19 Crisis

Dr Ross TAPSELL
Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Australian National University

DAY 2 – SECOND SESSION (Thursday, 22 October 2020)

10 am – 11.15 am

SESSION II: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ASEAN

The second session of the Roundtable will discuss the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on ASEAN's economies, the way forward to sustain open trade policies, prospects of supply chains' reconfiguration, and opportunities to leverage the existing regional agreements and the prospective Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to strengthen ASEAN's economic integration. The pandemic has pushed the economies of ASEAN member states into a lockdown to help contain the virus and save lives. However, the strict lockdown can worsen an economic recession, at least in the short run. Economic slowdown has been further exacerbated by temporary trade restrictions due to concerns over domestic shortages of food and critical medical supplies. On the positive side, the pandemic reinforced the trend of firm relocations from China to other countries, which presents an opportunity for ASEAN to re-position itself in the global supply chains. Such opportunities for ASEAN can be further supported by the implementation of RCEP to lower trade costs and provide deeper common disciplines that facilitate the operation of economic activities spanning multiple borders.

Moderator: Dr THAM Siew Yean
Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **The Economic Impact of Covid-19 on ASEAN**

Ms Selena LING
Chief Economist, OCBC Bank

Positioning ASEAN in Global Supply Chains' Reconfiguration

Dr Jayant MENON

Visiting Senior Fellow, Regional Economic Studies Programme,
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Strengthening ASEAN's Economic Integration

Tan Sri Dr. Munir MAJID
Chairman, CIMB ASEAN Research Institute (CARI)

DAY 3 – THIRD SESSION (Friday, 23 October 2020)

10 am – 11.15 am

SESSION III: DEALING WITH A VOLATILE WORLD

This concluding session will examine the geopolitical fallouts of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the falling apart of US-China relations, and how ASEAN and its member states can assert their agency and preserve their freedom of choice in this far less benign environment. The region has steadfastly refused to make a “binary choice” between the two major powers. What does that mean going forward? Instead of holding on to the passive position of neutrality and neutralisation, how can ASEAN enhance the nexus of “national and regional resilience” to take a positive and principled stand on geopolitical developments facing the region, and to build coalitions with like-minded partners near and far in maintaining the rules-based international system? The Covid-19 crisis has also exposed the inadequacy and dysfunction of multilateral institutions in the face of rising great power rivalry, protectionism, nationalism and nativism. Is it high time to update ASEAN-style multilateralism so that it can be more nimble and effective in response to black swan events of today and tomorrow?

Moderator: Dr Malcolm COOK
Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **ASEAN’s Agency amid Great Power Rivalry**

Mr Bilahari KAUSIKAN
Chairman, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

Multilateralism in a post-Covid-19 world

Mr Sihasak PHUANGKETKEOW
Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Thailand

Revisiting Regional Resilience and Neutrality

Dr Marty NATALEGAWA
Former Foreign Minister of Indonesia

11.15 am – 11.30 am

Concluding Remarks

Ms Sharon SEAH
Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre

DAY 1 (Wednesday, 21 October 2020)

OPENING REMARKS



Mr Choi Shing Kwok is Director of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and Head of the ASEAN Studies Centre at the Institute. Previously, he was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources from 2012 to 2017, and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport from 2005 to 2012. Prior to that, he was Director, Security and Intelligence Division, Ministry of Defence. Mr Choi was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) (Military) in 1993 and the Meritorious Service Medal in 2000 for his significant contributions to the Singapore Public Service.



Mr Christian Echle is the Director of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, based in Singapore. In addition to political cooperation, the program focuses on the dialogue between Europe and Asia in the areas of security, multilateralism and digitization. Prior to that, Mr Echle was responsible for the foundation's Media Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa (2012-2017). Mr Echle was awarded Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's scholarship for young journalists (2002-2007), and worked for the German public broadcaster ZDF, and newspapers Badische Neueste Nachrichten and Badische Zeitung during this time.

KEYNOTE MESSAGE



Dr Koh Poh Koon is Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Health of Singapore overseeing healthcare financing policies and healthcare manpower development. Dr Koh is also the Deputy Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress. He is the Vice Co-Chair of the Singapore-Jiangsu Economic Council, and co-chair of two sub-committees overseeing the transformation of the manufacturing and the trade and connectivity clusters of the Future Economy Council. Prior to his appointment at the Ministry of Health, he was Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry. Before joining politics, Dr Koh held academic appointments as Clinical Lecturer in the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine at the National University of Singapore, Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School and Adjunct Clinician Scientist with the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) under the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star). Dr Koh was the Director of the Colorectal Cancer Molecular Genetics Research Laboratory and the founding Director of the Colorectal Cancer Genomic Health Service.

SESSION I



Ms Moe Thuzar is a Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute’s Regional Socio-Cultural Studies Programme. She also co-coordinates the Myanmar Studies Programme. She was previously a lead researcher at the ASEAN Studies Centre at ISEAS. Moe joined ISEAS in 2008, after spending close to ten years at the ASEAN Secretariat coordinating regional cooperation in social and human development. A former diplomat, Moe is researching the socio-cultural underpinnings of Burma’s Cold War foreign policy for her PhD and spent the 2019-20 academic year as a Fox International Fellow at Yale University’s MacMillan Center.



Dr Mely Caballero-Anthony is Professor and Head of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her research interests include global governance, multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific, non-traditional security and ASEAN regionalism. She has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and international presses. Her latest books include: *Negotiating Governance on Non-Traditional Security in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). She has held appointments in international institutions, serving as member of the UN Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (2013-2017) and as Chair in 2016; and as Director of External Relations of the ASEAN Secretariat (2011-2012).



Dr Jonatan Lassa is an interdisciplinary social scientist with an engineering background. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Humanitarian, Emergency & Disaster Management at Charles Darwin University, Australia. He served as an adjunct fellow at RSIS, NTU, and Senior Fellow at Resilient Development Initiative and Institute of Resource Governance and Social Change in Indonesia. His research interest covers institutional and policy dimension of disaster and climate adaptation, mitigation, political will for resilience, recovery policy, disaster governance, food systems, complex network, humanitarian NGOs and human security. His area of interest includes, but is not limited to, Southeast Asia and Pacific.



Dr Ross Tapsell is a senior lecturer and researcher at the Australian National University’s College of Asia and the Pacific, specialising in Southeast Asian media. He is the author of *Media Power in Indonesia: Oligarchs, Citizens and the Digital Revolution* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017) and co-editor of *Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and Divergence* (ISEAS Publishing, 2017). He has written for The New York Times, The Guardian, VICE and other publications in the Southeast Asian region. Dr Tapsell’s main research interests focus on digital technologies and their relationship to media, culture and politics in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

DAY 2 (Thursday, 22 October 2020)

SESSION II



Dr Tham Siew Yeap is Visiting Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and Professor Emeritus, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). She was formerly Director and Professor of International Trade at Institute of Malaysian and International Studies, UKM. Her research interests cover trade in goods and services as well as foreign direct investment. She has published extensively on trade-related issues in books and journals such as *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Emerging Markets, Finance and Trade*, *Asian Economic Panel* and *Prague Economic Papers*, besides co-editing numerous books published by international publishing houses. She earned a Ph.D degree in Economics from University of Rochester, USA.



Ms Selena Ling is the Chief Economist for OCBC Bank. As Head of Treasury Research & Strategy, she leads a research team that is responsible for Treasury market research, forecasts and trading recommendations for the bank, covering fixed income, interest rates, corporate credit, foreign exchange and macroeconomic commentary. Under her leadership, OCBC's research capabilities have been greatly valued by customers and highly ranked in surveys. She is a member of the OCBC Wealth Panel for Singapore and Malaysia, and a council member for the Economic Society of Singapore. She was conferred the IBF Fellow Award in Financial Markets in 2017. Her research has been extensively quoted and published by prominent media across print, television and radio.



Dr Jayant Menon is Visiting Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, following his early retirement from the ADB, where he was Lead Economist in the Office of the Chief Economist. He started work at Monash University at its original campus in Clayton, Melbourne. He has also worked at the University of Melbourne, Victoria University, ADB Institute in Tokyo and the American University in Washington, DC. He holds adjunct appointments with the Australian National University, University of Nottingham, UK and IDEAS, Malaysia. He has served on the Advisory Boards of CDRI, Cambodia and University of Nottingham, Malaysia. He has authored and edited 15 books, 40 chapters in books and 80 articles in peer-reviewed journals.



Tan Sri Dr. Munir Majid is currently Chairman of CIMB ASEAN Research Institute, of ASEAN Business Advisory Council Malaysia, and President of the ASEAN Business Club. He also sits on the Board of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia and is Board Chairman of the Institute for Capital Market Research Malaysia (ICMR). He is an active advocate of deeper ASEAN Economic Integration. He has extensive experience and is well known in the Malaysian corporate world. He is formerly the Chairman of Bank Muamalat Malaysia Berhad (2008-2020). He had been the Group Editor of the *New Straits Times*, first Executive Chairman of CIMB and Founding Chairman of the Malaysian Securities Commission. After stepping down from the Securities Commission, he became Independent Non-Executive Director of Telekom Malaysia Berhad, Chairman of Celcom (Malaysia) Berhad and Non-Executive Chairman of Malaysian Airline System Berhad. He was Founder President of the Kuala Lumpur Business Club (KLBC), established in 2003 and is a member of the Court of Fellows of the Malaysian Institute of Management.

DAY 3 (Friday, 23 October 2020)

SESSION III



Dr Malcolm Cook is a Visiting Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore and has worked for the Institute since 2014. Concurrently, he is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Lowy Institute in Sydney and a Visiting Fellow at the National Security College in Canberra. Malcolm has worked in Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Japan.



Mr Bilahari Kausikan is currently Chairman of the Middle East Institute, an autonomous institute of the National University of Singapore. He has spent his entire career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his 37 years in the Ministry, he served in a variety of appointments at home and abroad, including as Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and as the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry. Raffles Institution, the University of Singapore and Columbia University in New York all attempted to educate him.



Ambassador Sihasak Phuangketkeow was previously Permanent Secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was Ambassador of Thailand to Tokyo (2015) and Ambassador of Thailand to France (2016–2018). Prior to that, he was Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006) and Thailand's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva (2007). Between 2010 and 2011, he was President of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Ambassador Sihasak has also been an active contributor to the work of ASEAN, serving as Thailand's Senior Officials Meeting Leader to ASEAN in 2006–2007, and again since 2011. Ambassador Sihasak had also served at the Thai Embassies in Washington DC and Tokyo, and as Thailand's Consul-General in Hong Kong. He was also Chair of the High-Level Panel on an ASEAN Human Rights Body that drafted the Terms of Reference establishing the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.



Dr R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa served as Foreign Minister of Indonesia (2009–2014). He was Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN (2007–2009) and Ambassador to the UK and Ireland (2005–2007). He is a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Board on Mediation, UNSG's Advisory Board on Disarmament, and UN Institute for Disarmament Research's Board of Trustees. Dr Natalegawa authored "Does ASEAN Matter? A View from Within" (2018) and is cited as "one of the most respected foreign policy and international security thinkers of his generation, both within Indonesia, in Southeast Asia, and in the broader Asia-Pacific region". He is presently a member of the International Academic Advisory Committee of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies; Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)'s Southeast Asia Advisory Board; International Crisis Group's Board of Trustees; Jeju Forum's Global Advisory Committee; University of Western Australia's Public Policy Institute Advisory Board; Ottawa-based Global Centre for Pluralism's Board of Directors. He is also a Prominent Research Scholar and member of the Honorary Board of the Bank of Indonesia Institute, and Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) Distinguished Fellow.

CONCLUDING REMARKS



Ms Sharon Seah is Coordinator of the ASEAN Studies Centre at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. She is concurrently Coordinator of the Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme at the Institute. Prior to joining ISEAS, she was Associate Director of the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore. Ms Seah served as Deputy Director for International Relations at the National Environment Agency from 2013-2015, and was part of the Singapore Foreign Service from 2001 - 2012. Ms Seah maintains a keen interest in ASEAN and climate change issues. She earned her LLM degree in Public and International Law from the University of Melbourne, Australia in 2018.