

**THINK NEXT, ACT NEXT – THE NEXT GEN EU-ASEAN THINK TANK
DIALOGUE (EANGAGE 2021-2022)**

**EANGAGE CONFERENCE
“ADDRESSING CHALLENGES TOGETHER: WORKING TOWARDS
ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASEAN AND EU”
7 – 9 APRIL 2022 | SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA**



FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Background

The two-year project “Think Next, Act Next – The Next Gen EU-ASEAN Think Tank Dialogue” (EANGAGE) funded by the EU, aimed to encourage greater collaborative research between the EU and ASEAN.

The EU is ASEAN’s 3rd largest trading partner and largest investor.¹ Yet, despite steady progress in economic, political and diplomatic relations between the two regions, it had been noted that “ASEAN’s cooperation with the EU has not reached its full potential.”² Within this context, one of the main aims of the EANGAGE project was to conduct comparative research and increase awareness about EU-ASEAN cooperation among young researchers.

Since 2021, the Political Dialogue Programme Asia of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in partnership with the Asian Vision Institute (AVI), Cambodia and the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV) have promoted the exchange of knowledge between think tanks and researchers in the two regions. The project also aimed to raise awareness of how the EU and ASEAN are addressing the main challenges in the key areas of sustainable development, connectivity and security.

Three research clusters on security, sustainable development and connectivity were established. Over 70 young researchers from think tanks and academic institutions in the EU and ASEAN worked together on policy papers and academic research. The EANGAGE Research Fellows received regular input through lectures, background discussions, cluster meetings and training workshops.

However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, in 2021, the interactions were mainly virtual, which limited the networking opportunities of the project. To address this, the project hosted its first face-to-face conference in April 2022. The conference explored how the EU and ASEAN are working together to address the challenges of achieving sustainable development.

About 50 researchers, representatives from think tanks, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, and senior policy makers attended the conference. The conference featured keynote speeches, panel discussions and presentations by EANGAGE Research Fellows.

H.E. Igor Driesmans, Ambassador of the EU to ASEAN provided the welcome address through a recorded video. Keynote speeches were delivered by H.E. Dr. Sok Siphana, Senior Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia and Chairman, Board of Directors, Asian Vision Institute; H.E. Dr. Chhem Kieth Rethy, Minister Delegate Attached to the Prime Minister’s Office, Royal Government of Cambodia; and H.E. Suos Yara, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Commission of the National Assembly of Cambodia.

¹ Source: European Commission, “Countries and Regions,” <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/asean/>, last accessed 22 March 2022.

² Source: Lay Hwee Yeo, “ASEAN AND EU: From Donor-Recipient Relations to Partnership with a Strategic Purpose,” In Tommy Koh and Lay Hwee Yeo (eds), *ASEAN-EU Partnership: The Untold Story*, (Singapore: World Scientific, 2020), 3.

Summary of Proceedings

WELCOME ADDRESS

H.E. Igor Driesmans

Ambassador of the EU to ASEAN

Your Excellency, Dr. Sok Siphana, Senior Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia and Chairman, Board of Directors of the ASEAN Vision Institute, Your Excellency Dr. Chhem Kieth Rethy, Minister Delegate attached to the Prime Minister's Office, Dr. Chheang Vannarith, President of the Asian Vision Institute, Alina Reiss, Deputy Director of the Regional Programme for Political Dialogue of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, panellists, participants, good day to all of you. And it is with great pleasure that I'm addressing you today for this opening of the high-level conference on "Addressing Challenges Together: Working Towards Achieving Sustainable Development in ASEAN and the EU."

I'm glad to see many friends and colleagues from Cambodia, the region and beyond gathered here on this occasion for what I hope will be a frank exchange of ideas with high level speakers on how ASEAN and the EU can work together to promote sustainable development and make our planet great again. This conference is organised in the framework of the EU funded two-year project "Think Next, Act Next - The Next Gen EU-ASEAN Think Tank Dialogue" or EANGAGE 2021-2022, which brings together young and talented research fellows from ASEAN and the EU to foster a deeper understanding of EU-ASEAN relations in three areas, namely connectivity, security and sustainable development.

This project is significant because it focuses on a new generation of researchers who I hope will develop working relations which will endure in the years and even decades to come. It's very timely to develop a more systematic way for EU and ASEAN fellows and think tankers to exchange, to develop projects and promote innovative research and policy ideas as the EU and ASEAN embark on a new chapter of our common journey following the elevation of relations to strategic partnership in December 2020.

A strong ASEAN-EU relationship and close cooperation based on our shared values of multilateralism are more important than ever in these difficult times. It is also our joint duty to tackle the global environmental crisis and pursue a global green transition. That's why on the EU side, the European Commission has pursued with vigour the implementation of the European Green Deal, which we also put at the centre of our post COVID-19 recovery plan. We've already delivered several strategic policy tools under the European Green Deal. I think about the Climate Law, the Biodiversity Strategy, the Farm to Fork strategy, the Circular Economy Action Plan and the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. This year, we have also adopted the Forest Strategy and the Zero Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water and Soil.

Sustainable development is increasingly at the heart of our partnership with ASEAN. We engage with ASEAN in a regular high-level dialogue on environment and climate, which allows us to address a number of converging and interrelated crises that we're facing today: the climate crisis, a biodiversity crisis and a resource or pollution crisis, which are all compounded by continued population growth and rapid urbanisation. Let me add at this very day we welcome in Jakarta European Commissioner for Environment, Virginijus Sinkevičius to strengthen further the EU-ASEAN partnership on all of these issues.

Today's conference will give us the opportunity to reflect on how the EU and ASEAN can cooperate including at the multilateral level to strengthen our policies for sustainable development, fight against climate change and promote synergies between the EU and ASEAN green deals. I wish you a successful and fruitful exchange for the coming days and I thank you very much for your attention.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Ms. Alina Reiss, Deputy Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Singapore welcomed the participants to the conference on behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. She underlined the importance of the topic of the conference – sustainable development - as one, if not *the* most crucial issue for the next generation to come. Ms. Reiss highlighted that the conference was being held in the backdrop of a world in turmoil and global disruptions such as the war in Ukraine. In light of this, regional cooperation of ASEAN and the EU countries, and the need to develop multilateral solutions becomes even more important. She stressed that the conference was therefore, very topical, not just in relation to sustainable development, but also for security and connectivity. All three issues are connected: “There is no sustainable development without peace and there is also no peace without connectivity.”

Ms. Reiss provided a brief background to the EANGAGE project and its goals. Referring to the goals and vision of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the newly formed Republic of Germany and the name giver of the Foundation, she mentioned that the conference served his legacy well by focusing on ASEAN-EU joint action to achieve sustainable development. Ms. Reiss concluded by outlining the highlights of the conference programme and thanking the keynote speakers, panellists, speakers and partners for their support.

KEYNOTE SPEECH 1³

KEY PRIORITIES AND DELIVERABLES OF

CAMBODIA'S ASEAN CHAIRMANSHIP AND ASEAN-EU PARTNERSHIP

Delivered by:

H. E. Dr. Sok Siphana

Senior Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia and Chairman, Board of Directors, Asian Vision Institute

Thank you to you all for making the effort to make this event a reality. It is such a pleasure to finally meet each other in person. I am tired of talking into a computer in a small room and then trying to feel like I'm in the big world. But at the end after you turn off your computer you are in your room somewhere. Anyhow, it is a good feeling to be back in this atmosphere.

What should I say? Alina has set the stage quite well already in the context of our world - what's happening in Ukraine and closer to home, what's happening in Myanmar. So, these are the two main preoccupations. With Myanmar, as Cambodia began to assume its Chairmanship, we already have had a taste of the difficulties lying ahead of us. In the last couple of months there was a flurry of activities. My Prime Minister flew to Myanmar in January to try to break the ice and set the stage for the Special Envoy, who happened to be my Foreign Minister. He came back from Myanmar about ten days ago and he held a debriefing for the diplomatic corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is sad to sit there and listen to his efforts to try to reduce the violence, to try to bring people to the table to talk, and to try to open a corridor of humanitarian aid to help the Myanmar people. It's a worrisome prospect for the future of the region.

And then in February, we had the Ukraine invasion. I remembered in November, when I was chairing the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit - I was the senior official at that time - and we were negotiating the Chair Statement with 51 countries. If you think video conferencing is fun, to negotiating and finding consensus on a text with 51 faces on the screen. Believe me, it was a very tough assignment. We had to prolong the meetings and add days and weekends, sometimes just to clear one paragraph.

Back in November, I already felt a bit of intensity. But I would have never imagined that there would be a war in Europe, never. At that time, I thought, "Why is Russia giving a hard time to the European Union? Why does Russia oppose everything the European Union says?" China used to be the 'hot' potato. "What's happening?" I talked to my colleagues in Phnom Penh, and I said, "Something is wrong here. The European Union and Russia, they're too tense." Two and a half months later, the war broke out. Speaking of multilateralism, it's really a challenge with what is happening now in the world.

³ The full text of the keynote speech is included here, but has been slightly modified from the original version.

But anyway, let me try to paint a more optimistic view of Cambodia's Chairmanship amidst this tense scenario that we're currently facing. Of course, Myanmar is on the agenda. My Foreign Minister hoped to lead a few more missions. But as a Special Envoy for the ASEAN rotating Chairmanship, his involvement is quite limited. It is only one year. After that, it will be Indonesia that will hold the ASEAN Chairmanship.

But what he will try to do this year is to build some level of confidence, to build trust. Because without trust, there is no dialogue. Without dialogue, forget about progress. So, the idea is to try to go one step at a time. Our approach is "Let's go slow, let's pick up the low hanging fruit, let's write a small success story to build upon." So, on the issue of Myanmar, we are approaching with cautious optimism, with the hope that by the end of our Chairmanship, we will have established enough trust, enough confidence to get the parties to come to the table. For now, no one is ready to come and sit at the table. These are the sorts of dilemma that we are facing in Myanmar. It is a very complex situation.

I do want to focus more on the positive things of our Chairmanship. This is important for our young researchers to give some sense of hope, because without hope, there is no life. The hope is that Cambodia is working very closely with the international community in the area of peace. We have a very strong peace agenda. We have UN peacekeeping operations in which we are very involved. We have a lot of women peacekeepers involved in these peace operations. This is something Cambodia takes a lot of pride in. I met the Japanese Ambassador the other day, and he said: "From being a recipient of the UN peacekeeping forces, now Cambodia have become the provider of peace." That is one item that we are so proud of. So, as part of our ASEAN Chairmanship agenda, there will be several events relating to women, peace and security.

What we will also try to do on other fronts is on the economic aspects. Economic issues matter quite a bit in the context of this unstable world because it is all about trying to find sustainability. But how can you get sustainability when your supply chains are totally disrupted? For example, how can you find stability when you cannot buy microchips for your microprocessors?

Supply chain is a serious issue. Now, when I pumped gas coming from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, it costs me 50 dollars, but in the past, it used cost me only 25 dollars. The price for gasoline is soaring. And we really don't know what tomorrow will bring. So, these are some real challenges. Production in the Ukraine is totally disrupted. I cannot imagine what Europe is worrying about now, I cannot imagine being left in the cold with no gas to heat up the house. These are some of the issues that we will try to push under the ASEAN Chairmanship. We will try to try to find ways to facilitate trade, make trade flow much smoother, but it's not an easy task.

The bright side is that we have the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Amidst this commotion, ASEAN managed to come together and conclude the RCEP. I would love to see India in the RCEP, but India walked out at the last minute. But we still have 15 countries and that's not so bad. So, this year, the trade agreement has entered into force.

I hope that in the next several months a lot of us will try to learn the ropes, the rules of origin, the customs framework, to facilitate trade to move goods and products. These are the activities that are happening that we don't actually see. E-commerce is something on the top of the agenda and this is all deriving from the RCEP. Another question is how to stimulate economic activity for SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises). I'm not talking about Lazada, Grab, the big guys. I'm talking about the small and medium enterprises. They need this. They need that access to do trade, to improve our life, their life. So, RCEP will be a big boost for Cambodia. It's like a second wave of reform after we joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2004. Now, the effects have started to subside, but the RCEP is giving a big stimulus. The Ministry of Commerce is quite keen to push this trade agenda. Of course, there are other aspects, such as the ASEAN plus one FTAs, where we try to move up, improve, and update them. So, the trade issue is a top priority for our Chairmanship. We hope we will be able to move the RCEP into an operationalized mode.

The ASEAN Chairmanship is for one year. So, more than likely most of the initiatives or activities carry on from previous chairmanships. Don't expect anything earth-shattering. It's a continuum, a progression. What was started by Singapore a few years ago, for example, the Smart Cities Initiative is a good example. It took a few years, but we now have in every ASEAN country, four or five provinces that can harness the power of Smart Cities. So, what we're going to start this year, more than likely will not materialise this year, but they will carry through to the next few chairmanships.

The third pillar is quite broad, I would say. Because we deal with socio-cultural aspects where there are a lot of different activities. I struggle to find out how many initiatives or activities that we as a whole are doing, because there are so many things that we're doing, but unfortunately, this pillar does not get a lot of attention as the pillar on political security. And that pillar sucks up 90 percent of the oxygen from the remaining issues. In pillar three, there are a lot of activities, which are the under current in the bottom of the ocean. You don't see it, but it is the foundation of ASEAN community building.

That's how I see the priorities for Cambodia's Chairmanship. Of course, as related to the European Union, we have a lot of areas that are we working on. We will try to implement the Civil Aviation Agreement that was recently signed, and we have elevated the ASEAN-EU relationship to the level of a Strategic Partnership. These are all the things that we need to push. This conference is a good example where we try to get think tanks and researchers to come up with ideas, suggestions, and initiatives so they can fit into the track one process, because track one also needs initiatives. Most bureaucrats operate in their box. And that's the job of think tank to think outside the box.

One of the things that I would say has a good effect on EU-ASEAN relations is the ASEM work, because ASEM includes EU, ASEAN and NESAs or Northeast South Asia. In the ASEM context, we have a lot of initiatives, a lot of ideas to push forward in this partnership. In this rocky world, it's very important that we keep multilateralism alive and afloat.

On that note, I want to say thank you to you all. I wish you all a good two-day conference and I hope that by the end of the conference, you can come up with some good ideas and suggestions to provide feedback to the governments of ASEAN countries and to your respective European country. Hopefully, we can do something to make the world a better place. Thank you very much.

KEYNOTE SPEECH 2⁴

ASEAN-EU PARTNERSHIP ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Delivered by:

H.E. Dr. Chhem Kieth Rethy

**Minister Delegate Attached to the Prime Minister's Office, Royal
Government of Cambodia**

Thank you, good morning. For thirty-five years, I was a scholar, roaming the world when the Covid pandemic abruptly interrupted our journey. Like all of us, this is my first face-to-face conference after a while. So, we are back now and I love seeing young scholars in this room. I'd like to welcome you all to Siem Reap-Angkor.

Cooperation in ancient Angkor

This is the oldest, most ancient civilization in this part of the world. In the 13th century, according to historians, it was estimated that the population of Angkor Thom- the imperial capital of Angkor - was about 900,000 people, while London was at 200,000, so Angkor Thom was 4 times bigger. Reigning over 900,000 people required a unique and great leadership in order to bring the Angkor civilization to its peak at that time. Consider for example the remarkable public health system. We had, according to scholars, a network of more than a hundred hospitals in the empire. There was a hospital every forty kilometres, and as such it was the most sophisticated public health system in the ancient world. The building of such infrastructures like temples, roads, universities, hospitals required proper science and technology knowledge, even before the word science was coined sometime later in the 16th century. And above all an active cooperation between key stakeholders was necessary.

Forty-five years ago, a team of American scientists looked at the structure and spatial orientation of Angkor Wat temple. Astronomy studies showed that the Angkor towers were properly aligned with both lunar and solar eclipses with an error of only 0.1 degree. Visit Angkor and you will discover the advancement of science and technology in this part of the world a thousand years ago. Again, such an architectural achievement required a smooth cooperation through an effective chain of command from the King to his high priests and ministers down to the engineers and their technical team. Some exchanges of science and technology know-how with ancient India and China were noted in the epigraphic texts of Angkor and Chinese chronicles. These data reflect the scope and scale of international partnership in the past.

Cooperation patterns of 21st century Cambodia

In Cambodia today, we have a demography that is the envy of many rich countries. Our female fertility rate is 2.6. Seventy percent of the population are under the age of 70 – thus many are very technically savvy. I teach undergraduates in my spare time because I wish to be close to the students. Thanks to the Internet, nowadays Cambodian kids in high schools, just like their peers

⁴ The full text of the keynote speech is included here, but has been slightly modified from the original version.

in developed world are talking about cryptocurrency and Metaverse. That's the reality of Cambodia today. It's not Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge, it's not Cambodia that was "punished" by the West in the 80's. Fifty years ago, we were victims of big power's foreign policy, Cambodia was denied access to the outside world, thus preventing any international partnership. But today, Cambodia is different! We are open to the global world! Our economy is striving. Cambodia is entering an era of scientific enlightenment. Hundreds of brilliant graduates are returning home to populate the public and private sectors, while continuing to nurture partnership that was established during their study abroad. So, it's a great time to be here. After teaching abroad for forty years, practicing academic medicine in three different continents and visiting more than seventy countries, while preaching on how to build a university for the 21st century, I am just delighted to be home! From my own experience and exposure to international partners, I can witness the unique pattern of Cambodian interactions within the country, the region and beyond. Cambodia is now keen to make friends across geographical and cultural boundaries and cooperate at a grand scale.

Not too long ago, while at the IAEA in Vienna, Dr. Sok Siphana wrote to me "Brother, it's time to come home." I am so grateful as he has inspired and convinced me to return home. "We need a Cambodian, a true scholar, to lead a prestigious think tank named CDRI" he said. To be honest, at the beginning, I had little interest in development policy as I was absolutely consumed by activities to mitigate the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, that requires a solid international partnership and cooperation. But out of respect and admiration for him, I competed for the job and got it. The rest is history!

It is at CDRI (Cambodia Development Research Institute) that I truly realized that our Cambodian scholars were actually ready to engage with any international partners who are keen to cooperate. While at CDRI, I also discovered that policy researchers and social scientists focus on social problems. Rightly so, they want to fight poverty by designing beautiful policy models. I ask them "how can you fight poverty without building wealth first?". And the key to produce wealth is to apply science and technology to boost economic growth! As a pragmatic physician and ignorant of development theories, I upset many of my colleagues. Yet, with the unfailing support of Dr. Sok Siphana, then Chairman of the CDRI Board, we start expanding our policy research programmes to include science and technology as a powerful tool "to fight poverty".

After my first five-year term at CDRI, the Prime Minister invited me to join the government, which I accepted with great honour and humility. Indeed, being a true scholar and a scientist in the Prime Minister Office was initially quite a challenge. It was very difficult, but I survived the first three years. Again, here the ability to cooperate is key to my successful integration into the civil services. Soon after I joined the government, our Prime Minister who has faith in science and technology initiated the creation of the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation. We have now a ministry that has been tasked to coordinate science and technology policy across the government. As I said before, Cambodia is entering the era of scientific enlightenment for which international partnership is key mechanism towards achieving development policy goals.

Cambodia and global scientific cooperation

Being invited today at a dialogue about ASEAN-EU cooperation is a real pleasure for me. You have come to realize the beauty and complexity of Cambodia with her rich civilization made of a

diversity of religions, cultures and histories. Today, Cambodia is on the move, pushed by the aspirations of its young and Internet-savvy population. Also, ASEAN is composed of rich and poor countries, small and large population, young and old population, nascent and advanced industries. ASEAN is a complex mosaic that is characterized by its diversity, but yet, we tried to work as one family, where centrality is the main pillar for success. As a scientist and science policy maker, allow me to focus on science cooperation. When we think about partnership and cooperation in science, I would refer to Yuval Harari, a historian from Israel. He is a medievalist like me, but he's engaged in promoting big history, looking at the history of humankind, while using story-telling skills to share the results of his research. He raised a big question on *why do human animals*- let's not forget, we are human animals (a very nasty species sometimes) -*cooperate?* For him, "it's that capacity to cooperate that makes us superior to all other animals of the living kingdom". Based on our natural capacity to cooperate, let's try to see how best we can work together. As scientists, we don't suppose to have prejudices, do we? When politicians stop talking to each other, scientists should continue to engage in conversation. In my capacity as senior official of the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation, I was tasked to coordinate the Russia-ASEAN scientific cooperation this year. After the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, scientific cooperation with Russia has become "politically" problematic? What is the right thing to do? Yet, as a scientist, I believe that we should keep talking across national boundaries. In the past, a few scientists in the United States (US) never stopped interacting with their Cuban counterparts. Above all, the practice of science should be a universal endeavour.

After all these considerations, let's see how science can strengthen the pursuit of sustainability, and how science can enable healthy economic development. I learned about sustainable development during my tenure at CDRI, and then mostly through my encounter with Professor Jeffrey Sachs, from Columbia University. He is the top promoter of the SDGs and we met several times, most often via online conversation because of the disruptive pandemic. He had invited me to serve in my personal capacity at the Leadership Council of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Science and technology are important to generate solutions to the global challenges in order to achieve a sustainable development, through active and effective collaboration and partnership. Through my own experience, while trying to mitigate the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, I realized that the challenges of the world cannot be met if one works alone. A sincere cooperation and collaboration across scientific disciplines are essential. A collaboration between social scientists and natural scientists is also key in this endeavour. Extending this partnership to include members of the civil society is equally important. The other challenge is how to conduct effective communication between scientists and policy makers on the one hand, and between scientists and the public on the other hand. That was exactly the challenges that I met when I was involved in the mitigation the nuclear disaster of Fukushima. Bridging effectively diverse epistemic communities such as politicians, economists, scientists, and the public was a real challenge. A great sense of trust, confidence with open minded approach conditions success in all cooperation mechanisms. Trust deficit makes science communication with the public extremely difficult like what happened during the Fukushima nuclear accident where any attempt to make sense of the huge amount of data about radiation exposures represented a huge challenge for government officials and the IAEA staff. Indeed, ways to communicate health risks to the public in such a debatable context of nuclear energy are an uphill battle. The same issues can be also seen when dealing with the public perception of global warming, genetically modified

food or 5G telecommunication technology? More recently, in the midst of the Covid19 pandemic, science and pseudo-science co-habit, at least at the beginning of the outbreak, when we didn't know much about that virus. Nevertheless, the development and production of vaccine against Covid were achieved within one year. This technological prowess would certainly not be possible without a proper and effective collaboration among scientists from several countries? Most scientists agree that the pandemic is caused by humans because of our lifestyle. Three factors favour the emergence of pandemics: 1. rapid urbanization; 2. environmental degradation; 3. mass tourism. How can we address collectively these three factors that are the consequences of our lifestyle? Taking on this point, I would like to end by addressing the challenges and opportunities of partnership in science and technology as science should be globally connected beyond national boundaries. I welcome wholeheartedly the idea and the wish to strengthen EU-ASEAN partnership that should be extended to the science and technology sector. Also, science and technology progress in the 21st century is accelerated by the digital transformation of all sectors in our society.

Let's focus now a bit about the roles of digital technology in the deep transformation of our society. Many participants in this forum are from the millennial's generation. You were born with a mobile device in your hand with semiconductors at the core of Internet technology. The digital era turns all countries extremely interdependent. Social media and internet governance is by nature extremely complicated. The current trade war, as a result of big powers rivalry has recently affected the supply chains of electronic components of computers and mobile phones. Multilateralism diplomacy that governs global trade and security is being assailed by many angles. Governing and controlling the proliferation of nuclear weapons is relatively manageable when compared to the governance of Internet (to prevent cyberthreats) where many non-state actors came into the game. In the cyberspace era, one can ask who is doing what to whom? Who are the culprits? The rogue states or the criminal organizations? Which state is a truly rogue state? Who are the terrorists? Who are the freedom fighters?

Two irreconcilable ideologies dominate global debate about the Internet governance: One part of the world proposes the "Free Internet" model, while the other endorses the "Internet Sovereignty" model. How can we foster trust and confidence to encourage these opposing groups to cooperate and produce global public goods for the best interest of all citizens of the world? How can we develop policies that make our world safer? These are challenges for all of us. One last point about emerging technologies that test the status quo in the financial sector is worth noting: the role of central bank digital currency and cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency has been popular among the millennials. It obviates the role of the central banks as we know. It is a challenge to the supremacy of the US dollar while it raises the question of the future of money.

Finally, digital technology is in the hands of young people, people who are present in this room today. The challenges of the future are in your hands. Above all, I believe that there is no better opportunity for a people-to-people connection than this one today, where youth from Europe and Asia can meet, interact and exchange many ideas.

May I wish you all a great dialogue in Siem Reap and may the majestic Angkor temples offer you an inspiring place to build a long and lasting friendship, a key to build a better world for all of us.

KEYNOTE SPEECH 3⁵

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY AND PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN ASEAN AND THE EU

Delivered by:

H.E. Suos Yara

Chairman

Foreign Affairs Commission of the National Assembly of Cambodia

Good morning, everyone. You know, it's not easy for me to stand here today because before me is my professor. He knew me 30 years ago when I was younger, when I was a bachelor, when I was just a beginner, a young high school graduate.

We are going to share certain perspectives together about ASEAN and the EU this morning and it is a great honour that His Excellency Dr. Sok Siphana, my dear Professor, mentor and guru for many things, not just for academic purposes, but for life as well, is here with us today. And we have the honour to have Madame Khieu Mealy who is one of the leading entrepreneurs in Cambodia. Thank you very much for attending our conference today.

And of course, we have with us our great friend, Dr. Chheang Vannarith. He inspires many of our young leaders and young fellow researchers from Cambodia. Everyone says Cambodians only study in Europe, Cambodians only study in Singapore or maybe Vietnam and Russia and other countries. But right now, we have one Cambodian who taught at Leeds University and that is Dr. Chheang Vannarith. So, thank you very much that you are with us.

Actually, me and Daniel Schmücking from KAS, we've been friends for a long time. But we have talked honestly and directly about why there is only inspiration for British education in Cambodia, or maybe to go to America, or France or Australia but why not Germany? He said he had to be here with us to brainstorm to make a new door for the future of Cambodia and Europe. So right now, Daniel has to lead the way for innovative thinking and good cooperation.

Without delaying my intervention, I have to welcome Dr. Yeo again. We have met only online every time, but this is my first time to physically meet you. Thank you for visiting Siem Reap, our land of wisdom.

Everyone should know why we invite you here to Siem Reap - because Siem Reap is the door to Khmer civilization and identity. Before we came into the modern age, when we were in the middle of the Agricultural Age, there was a great, great king who built this city. His name is King Suryavarman II. He is the man who understood: what is independence? what is sovereignty? what is identity? What is modernity? You know, our King had more knowledge than us, 1000 years ago.

⁵ The full text of the keynote speech is included here, but has been slightly modified from the original version.

More than 1000 years ago, he knew what connectivity was. Dr. Ngoc mentioned just now connectivity is very important. But our King knew this 1000 years ago. He knew that water is really the key message, not electronics, not cyber connectivity, but the use of water to connect people. That's why he built the highest temple on top of the Kulen Mountain, and he started building Angkor Wat in three generations. So, we call it one, two, three. To create a civilization like Angkor we need a minimum of 100 years. So that it would last. So, right now, we are the inheritors of the civilization of Angkor because of King Suryavarman who first started the idea of independence, sovereignty, identity, and modernity. So welcome to Angkor again, to all of you.

Of course, we are going to address the challenges together today. As the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, a post COVID-19 socio-economic recovery is underway. There is an urgent need for a quicker, greener, more inclusive and more resilient recovery. To this end, we need to double down our efforts. I see a stronger role of the EU and Asia in this regard. However, as we speak, the world is falling apart. The war in Ukraine is generating ripple effects on global peace and stability and significantly disrupting the global socio-economic recovery. Moreover, the world order based on international law is under severe assault. Cambodia firmly adheres to international law and the principles and purpose of the UN Charter. Cambodia's position on the war in Ukraine is about upholding these principles and the non-use of force to change the status quo. So, we voted 'Yes' twice – once in the United Nations, and once in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to condemn the attack in Ukraine. So, we stand on the principles of the United Nations.

Closer to home, the unfolding political and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar is a complex issue at the moment. ASEAN credibility and relevance is at stake if it cannot have the five-point consensus on Myanmar implemented effectively, including immediate ceasefire of violence, the provision of humanitarian assistance and the facilitation of inclusive dialogue among all parties concerned. In addressing the issue of Myanmar, the forming of the state is very important. It depends on the design of the state from the beginning of colonization. The British designed Myanmar as a union, but I will say if I was there, I don't say I'm smarter, but I will say I will study deeper. Myanmar is not Cambodia, Myanmar is not Vietnam, Myanmar is not Singapore, Myanmar is not Malaysia, Myanmar should be something else. So, a State of Confederation like Switzerland would be more appropriate for Myanmar, not a federation, not a new union.

Facing such a challenging time and in this dangerous world, Parliaments and Parliamentarians need to be more proactive and robustly cooperate in shaping and moulding the international order and global governance for humanity. I attended the UAE conference last week, which was a gathering of 85 parliamentary representatives. It is another platform. You know about the IPU, the inter-parliamentary union which has 195 nations as members. But this is a new emerging Parliamentarian grouping, we call it International Parliament for Peace and Tolerance, which emphasizes interfaith dialogue among the different religious beliefs from each parliamentary group. So, it is very important for us to understand which nation, which state has suffered from war. Only those nations would understand what the impact of peace is. Peace is like oxygen, and it is very important for us. That's why the Parliamentarians of the EU and the Parliamentarians of ASEAN should play a vital role in influencing policies and priorities for strengthening the democratic foundation to advance international peace and cooperation. In addition, Parliamentarians can also form a communication channel between conflicting parties, facilitate dialogue, conduct fact finding missions, and defend international principles, norms and values.

For instance, last month in Indonesia, at the 144th assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as I am the chair of ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN plus China, Japan, and South Korea), we assisted to draft a peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine respecting international law, the UN Charter and territorial integrity. So, it was adopted unanimously. The resolution appeals to the Members of Parliament (MPs) from Russia and Ukraine to promote initiatives to cease hostility and resolve differences through peaceful diplomatic means.

Yes, I watch the information online, Deutsche Welle (DW), BBC and all the world channels and I see the women member parliamentarian crying on the screen. She only stays in a locked door and could manage with her iPhone link to speak out: what can parliamentarians do, under the ceiling, the artillery rockets flying over my head. So, this is a really deep cry for our parliamentarians. So, women, men, all are suffering from this. I could relate my feeling to this women parliamentarian given I also was under the ceiling when we had armed conflict with Thailand along the border of Preah Vihear, where my constituency is.

So that time the word we were thinking is peace. So, we call it God of Peace. So, God of peace is what? Dialogue and negotiation. The God on earth is dialogue and negotiation. Last week I was in Budapest, Hungary to observe the parliamentary elections 2022. I took the opportunity to visit a Ukrainian refugee transit centre to witness the part of the whole story of the humanitarian crisis due to the armed conflict in Ukraine. It caused over 4 million Ukrainians to flee their homeland. It is anti-peace and against the interests of humanity. To end a war, we need dialogue and negotiations that are conducted in a peaceful, frank, and sincere manner with full respect for the UN Charter. National independence, equal sovereignty, and territorial integrity in this view.

ASEAN somehow could play a role in this. Yes, because we have a centrality role. Neutrality is very important for ASEAN. Of course, we have diversity of thinking, but we could be one of the forces of trust. We can talk to the Russian side, we can talk to the Ukrainian side, we are friend to all, enemy to none. So, this is the kind of thing I think we need. Who will deliver the peace if we don't make it? So, I believe that Parliamentarians are very important. Of course, the executives from the government, they must implement the principle, the decision of the government. But Parliamentarians can be the conduits of trust, to build a bridge. Essentially, ladies and gentlemen, with ASEAN and the EU parliaments in cooperation, the real benefits of such cooperation are wide ranging. Below are my perspectives.

We need to promote more constructive dialogue and develop coordinated responses to global issues such as the climate crisis and international conflict. For peace to prevail, I call upon the party of conflict to end the war and the humanitarian crisis in no time through mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Moreover, I urge the international community to make a concerted effort together in the post conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation of Ukraine.

We had raised one initiative. As you are young scholars from different nations, I would also call to join your voices together with the Parliamentarians of your home country to raise a Universal Peace Charter together. This movement could be very important to call for organizational reforms in the United Nations. They have talked about reform for four decades, before my graduation, after my graduation, after I was elected - I still see no reform. So why call for peace? Peace should be respected on the principle of the value of humanity.

We need to reactivate and expedite the negotiation of the ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement and strengthen operations in digital economy and cybersecurity. In fact, ASEAN and the EU are active promoters of open, inclusive rule-based multilateralism. And these two regional organizations hold the key to maintaining world peace, promoting inter-regional integration and protecting the rules-based international order. This year ASEAN and the EU are holding a Commemorative Summit to mark the 45th anniversary of dialogue partnership. On this note, we need more robust comprehensive cooperation - from trade and investment to climate change to people-to-people ties and geostrategic and security cooperation, particularly in order to uphold the rules-based international order.

We talk about security cooperation. Security cooperation, yes, in Europe, you have NATO to protect you. For ASEAN we don't have teeth, no teeth, so we can't bite. So, we promote cultural cooperation, we promote economic cooperation. So, we sound more neutral if you talk about this value. So, the values of ASEAN and the values of the EU should complement each other rather than challenge each other, so that's why continued negotiation is very important. And let's start when Cambodia has the chairmanship of ASEAN. Let's benefit from open and free dialogue for a free trade agreement.

On the Sustainable Development Goals, we only have eight more years to accomplish them. To really achieve them, we need to enhance partnerships, especially a solid ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership which is result based and action oriented. More importantly, to achieve sustainable development together, we need to close the prevailing gaps in terms of development, technical and institutional capacity, and financial resources. On top of this, we need to boost the implementation of the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021- 2027 for the Asia Pacific region, which provides the means to strengthen the EU-ASEAN partnership in the areas of green inclusive development and sustainable connectivity.

I second the word from our friend from Vietnam that connectivity is an opportunity for us now. ASEAN and EU are preparing for the next Plan of Action 2023 - 2027. May I propose to include more practical cooperation on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly a blended financing mechanism for SDGs. Financing is a very big issue. Now, right after this war broke out, we know that it is important, so we can let the banks dominate or we could promote another way of trading. In addition, green financing, nature-based solutions, innovative and sustainable rural development, clean and renewable energy transition, women's empowerment, gender equality and inclusive digital transformation should be further emphasized.

The Cambodian Parliament, as the Rotating Chairs of the 43rd AIPA (Asian Inter-Parliamentary Assembly) this year is ready to promote dialogue and action that enhances peace and security, inclusive green recovery, social protection, women's empowerment, and gender equality. So, I proposed, as I am the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission to organize young parliamentarians from ASEAN and young parliamentarians from the EU to conduct an official dialogue. I would also like to ask your support, from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and AVI and other think tanks, not just only that, but also unlimited stakeholders to attend to this proposal for the first ever dialogue between ASEAN young parliamentarians and EU young parliamentarians.

To conclude, I would like to stress the principle of mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual trust, mutual interests for peace and prosperity. Along this line, we need to respect each other and treat each other equally, coordinate responses to global issues and challenges, and uphold the international order and, of course, international law. International law is important to protect small nations like us. Thank you very much.

PANEL DISCUSSION 1

ASEAN-EU COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Panellists:

Dr. Cheunboran Chanborey, Director General, Information, Research and Analysis Group, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee, Director, European Union Centre, Singapore

Dr. Daniel Schmücking, Director, Country Office Cambodia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Moderator:

Ms. Alina Reiss, Deputy Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

The panel discussion focused on cooperation and partnership between ASEAN and the EU. The panellists assessed the current status of ASEAN-EU cooperation and partnership, how it looks in reality, and explored ways to strengthen this partnership. Each of the panellists took turns to provide different perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership based on their own areas of expertise.

The panellists acknowledged that the ASEAN-EU partnership has grown from strength to strength. The EU is one of the oldest dialogue partners of ASEAN. This long history of partnership, which began in the 1970s is one of the key strengths of the partnership. The panellists described how this partnership has been resilient and has gone through different phases, ups and downs, but “yet we continue to engage each other and always find ways to cooperate, despite our differences.” Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee noted how the partnership has changed from being largely transactional to becoming more strategic and comprehensive and that this would become important as both regions navigate the current, increasingly complex and volatile world environment. The panellists also noted that the EU and ASEAN are both role models for multilateral organizations in the region.

Dr. Cheunboran Chanborey identified people-to-people connectivity (partnership through dialogues, exchange programs, joint seminars) as one of the strengths of the ASEAN-EU partnership. However, Dr. Daniel Schmücking expressed the opinion that while there were many high-level conferences and exchanges, people-to-people connectivity at the youth and student level (universities, student exchanges) were lacking. The panellists suggested that the EANGAGE project could be one means to address this gap.

The panellists also identified differences in cultural values between the EU and ASEAN,

geographical distance and institutional differences as some of the weaknesses in the partnership. One of the main weaknesses discussed was the misunderstandings or misperceptions between the two regional groupings. One of the main issues is that ASEAN was never designed to be a supranational regional entity, and follows the so-called ASEAN way of consensus, flexibility, and constructive engagement. Meanwhile, the EU has a different institutional structure and approach, which may sometimes lead to misunderstandings between the two regions on how to address policy issues. The perception that the EU engagement in ASEAN could also be inconsistent was also highlighted.

In terms of ways forward, the panellists agreed that projects like EANGAGE could assist in improving people-to-people connectivity, particularly among the youth who are the future. The need to improve mutual understanding between the two regions was emphasized. While there was concern that the Ukraine war may have disrupted the ASEAN-EU partnership to some extent, the panellists emphasized there are still many areas where the two regions can work together, for instance, in addressing COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery, promoting multilateralism and a rules-based international order.

Finally, the panellists noted that the EU has engaged in country-to country free trade agreements, but both regions need to resume efforts towards an ASEAN-EU Free Trade Agreement.

PANEL DISCUSSION 2

PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASEAN AND THE EU

Panellists:

Ms. Bernadette Victorio, Regional Programme Lead, Fair Finance Asia, OXFAM, Cambodia

Dr. Christian Hübner, Director, Regional Programme Energy Security and Climate Change Asia, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (via Weblink)

Ms. Sharon Seah Li-Lian, Senior Fellow and Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Moderator:

Dr. Chheang Vannarith, President, Asian Vision Institute

The second panel discussed ASEAN-EU cooperation towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting some of the challenges of achieving the SDGs, and opportunities for cooperation. The panel noted that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs and the current crises in the world, from the Ukraine war to the Myanmar conflict have made it even more difficult for countries to work towards achieving the SDGs.

Reflecting on the current challenges facing the world, the panel emphasized that it is strategic for the EU and ASEAN to cooperate together and highlighted energy and transport as two key areas for cooperation.

The panel discussed some of the challenges of EU climate finance for poor countries, and also emphasised the important role of the financial sector in catalysing change. It was noted that the financial sector in Asia is lagging behind and needs more investment and attention. The panel drew attention to the public and private funding gap, and the need for greater sensitivity in projects to issues of sustainability, climate objectives, human rights and other SDG commitments. There is often not much pressure and scrutiny on the private sector to apply sustainability targets.

The interoperability between EU-ASEAN taxonomies on sustainable finance and the use of carbon market mechanisms were identified as potential opportunities for cooperation. Collaboration in the area of carbon markets is also important as both ASEAN and EU markets are still using coal, and there is a need for diversification away from coal towards renewable energies. At present, carbon emission markets and trading schemes are very heterogeneous and not well developed in ASEAN, and there is scope for more cooperation with the EU. Such cooperation has become even more critical in light of current global crises and challenges.

The panel called for greater policy support for renewable energy; and for greater ASEAN-EU cooperation in the areas of climate and environment. Other aspects that were identified as important include: science communication (including communication between experts and non-experts), a change in the investment mind set with more investments in agriculture and the environment, and the need to utilise technology and digitalisation, such as the use of AT and IoT for agriculture (in which the private sector should also invest).

PANEL DISCUSSION 3

INSIGHTS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Panellists:

H.E. Khieu Mealy, Senior Partner at SokSiphana & Associates (a member of ZICO Law)

Ms. Touch Socheata, Co-Founder and CEO, WeMall

Mr. Yim Prosithyryth, CEO, Quantum Manufacturing Cambodia

Moderator:

Ms. Kathrin Reed, Fulbright Cambodia Researcher, 2021-2022, Dissertation Research Fellow, Center for Khmer Studies, Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of Political Science & IR, University of Delaware

The third panel of the day focused on sustainable development from the perspectives of private sector experts. The panel discussed the current state of private sector engagement in fostering sustainable development in the ASEAN region. The panel acknowledged that presently, there is not much focus on sustainable development in the private sector and discussed how greater private sector engagement in sustainable development can be harnessed.

Reflecting on their own personal experiences, including with online retail platforms such as We Mall, the panel agreed that technology will play a huge role in fostering sustainable development. Therefore, it is important for the private sector to embrace new technologies and build innovative technologies (with a focus on sustainability). To do so, and to enable entrepreneurship in the

private sector to flourish, the panel underlined the need for more capacity building, training and skills development.

The panel called upon policy makers to direct more funds towards reskilling and upskilling. The panel also noted there should be stronger public-private sector engagement, together with greater interaction of the private sector with think tanks on issues of sustainability and growth. Companies should also prioritise advancing the SDGs and implementing sustainable environmentally friendly solutions in their businesses.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought up fresh challenges, including in food security and consumer behavior. In addressing the current global challenges, the panel urged policymakers to look beyond politics and be sensible to the realities of the people, and the impact that policies (such as sanctions) have on the everyday lives of people.

Focusing specifically on Cambodia, the panel noted that the government has set up several working groups and reiterated the need for more public-private sector engagement. The panel also emphasized the need for revisions and updates of policies to reflect present realities, such as the rise in digital technologies.

In terms of opportunities for cooperation between the EU and ASEAN, the panel suggested that there should be an improvement in EU-ASEAN business matching, making rules clearer for businesses when they enter a country such as Cambodia, and exploring ways to make doing business easier.

INTRODUCTION TO DAY 2

Delivered by:

Dr. Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc (via Weblink),⁶Assistant Director General, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)

Dr. Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc welcomed the participants to the second day of the conference. She spoke about how the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV) views the relationship between the EU and ASEAN as a unique inter-regional partnership, and has over the years promoted dialogue amongst students and young researchers in the two regions. DAV has also worked closely with many partners from both the European Union and ASEAN to put forward new ideas to encourage new initiatives in Track 2 diplomacy. The close partnership with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung was also highlighted. Dr. Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc also mentioned that the DAV is honoured to be the Chair of the ASEAN-ISIS network.

Reflecting on the first day of the EANGAGE conference, she noted that there had been insightful discussions with H.E. Dr. Sok Siphana and other distinguished participants. She observed that there was general consensus on the importance of cooperation between EU and ASEAN, particularly as both regions face many common challenges. Researchers can put forward new

⁶ The speech has been edited from its original version.

ideas, new solutions for cooperation in order to achieve these common interests; and also promote regional and global peace, security and prosperity.

Dr. Nguyen Thi Bich Ngoc then provided some of the key highlights for the second day of the conference, such as the keynote speech by His Excellency, Suos Yara. She expressed the hope that all the fellows would also enjoy the in-depth panels on sustainable development, security and connectivity. These are the three key areas of cooperation between EU and ASEAN today, which are also closely inter-connected. Noting that the European Union has initiated the Global Gateway, she suggested that this was a good opportunity to explore ways to deepen ASEAN-EU relations cooperation, and wished the participants a successful conference.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS: EANGAGE RESEARCH PAPERS

The second day of the conference was devoted primarily to the presentation of research papers by the EANGAGE research fellows in three in-depth panels on the three focus areas of the EANGAGE project: connectivity, security and sustainable development. Each research group made a short presentation on their papers. At the end of each panel, there was a Q&A session where participants could provide feedback to the researchers on their research papers. The list of papers and their presenters is provided below. The final papers will be published as a collection of papers at the end of the project.

PANEL 1: Presentation by Fellows on Sustainable Development

- 1) Sustainable Finance Taxonomy in Southeast Asia: A Case of Cambodia
Presenter: **Dr. Keo Piseth**
- 2) Facilitating Citizen Participation for Smarter Cities in ASEAN and the EU
Presenter: **Ms. Nadina Alexandra Iacob**
- 3) Renewable Energy: Can the Efficiency of the Contracts Serve as an Investment Incentive?
Presenter: **Mr. Jannata Giwangkara**
- 4) What Can Modern Cities Learn from Nature?
Presenter: **Ms. Sath Kanyara**
- 5) Developing A Smart City: Cambodian & Indonesian Youth
Presenters: **Mr. Lim Chhay and Ms. Fadelia Deby Subandi**
- 6) Climate Solution: Experiences from the EU and ASEAN
Presenter: **Mr. Veasna Ky**
- 7) Carbon Pricing to Achieve Climate Targets: Potential Pathways for ASEAN
Presenter: **Ms. Hien Vu**
- 8) Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM): Prospects for EU & ASEAN
Presenter: **Ms. Melinda Martinus**

- 9) Smart Villages, Rural/Community-led Development and Rural Depopulation Avoidance
Presenter: **Ms. Sherillyn Raga**

Moderator:

Dr. Chheang Vannarith, President, Asian Vision Institute

PANEL 2: Presentation by Fellows on Security

- 1) The Belt and Road Initiative in Southeast Asia: A Delicate Balance Between External and Internal Security
Presenter: **Dr. Pascal Abb**
- 2) EU-ASEAN Technological Regionalism: How EU and ASEAN can Steer an Independent Path in the US-China Rivalry
Presenters: **Mr. Jefferson Jin Chuan Ng and Ms. Patrycja Pola Pendrakowska**
- 3) EU and ASEAN in the Context of Major Powers' Rivalry: Member States' Behaviours Towards Intergovernmental Regional Organisation
Presenter: **Mr. Luis Gabriel Alfonso Estrada**
- 4) Floating around the Indo-Pacific: The EU, ASEAN, and their Strategic Partners
Presenter: **Mr. Ivano di Carlo**
- 5) ASEAN-EU Cooperation in the Context of Indo-Pacific Great Power Rivalry
Presenter: **Dr. Aaron Rabena**
- 6) Vaccine Diplomacy Amidst the Great Power Competition: Thailand & Singapore's Conundrum
Presenter: **Mr. Alif Hidayat**
- 6) The Possible Collaboration between EU and ASEAN in the field of Human Security, Taking the Case of the Crisis in Myanmar
Presenter: **Ms. Francesca Manenti**

Moderator:

Ms. Vu Phuong Anh, Research Fellow, Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)

PANEL 3: Presentation by Fellows on Connectivity

- 1) Artificial intelligence and the Sustainable Development Goals in ASEAN
Presenter: **Dr. Upalat Korwatanasakul**

- 2) Facilitating Trade in EU and ASEAN through the Single Window
Presenters: **Ms. Catherine Setiawan** and **Ms. Pingkan Audrine**

- 3) Public Health and Connectivity in Time of a Global Pandemic: Pandemic Diplomacy, Vaccine Campaigns and Nationalism in Southeast Asia
Presenter: **Ms. Luzile Satur**

- 4) The E.U.'s Global Gateway Strategy: Enhancing Digital Governance in ASEAN
Presenter: **Mr. Muhammad Afiq Ismaizam**

- 5) Information and Communication Technology Solutions to Environmental Issues in the Greater Mekong Subregion
Presenter: **Dr. Upalat Korwatanasakul**

- 6) Nostalgic Strategy and Strategic Nostalgia - French Language in Vietnam and its Prospects in Southeast Asia
Presenter: **Ms. Trang Hong Vu**

Moderator:

Ms. Rosanna Fanni, Associate Researcher & Digital Forum Coordinator at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

CLOSING REMARKS AND NEXT STEPS

Delivered by:

Mr. Christian Echle (via [weblink](#)), Head of the Asia & Pacific Department, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Mr. Echle began his closing remarks by thanking the EANGAGE partners, the Asian Vision Institute, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, think tank representatives and the EANGAGE fellows. He expressed his regret at not being able to attend the event in person. Looking back at the decision to host the conference, he noted that this event had caused some 30 sleepless nights among the organisers because it was so different to organise a face-to-face event at the time of COVID-19. It was also a risk that was taken but Mr. Echle noted that it was worth taking the risk as the conference could bring together the EANGAGE fellows for the very first time, almost a year after the project had started. This is very important for the networking aspect and so many dimensions of the EANGAGE project to bring everyone together for the first time in one room.

Turning to the focus of the conference on sustainable development, Mr. Echle said that we had received a lot of valuable inputs through the representatives of various think tanks from Europe and ASEAN on this matter. It was pointed out several times throughout the event that this is THE topic for the young generation to become active in, because it will be the young generation who will have to bear the consequences of climate change. So, he felt happy that the project could focus on this topic, although he noted that the timing of the conference was somewhat overshadowed by the war in Ukraine.

Mr. Echle discussed the impact of the conflict in Ukraine on the relationship between the European Union and ASEAN, underlining the need to ensure that the war does not cause deeper divides between the European Union and ASEAN. Instead, he urged participants to find ways to move the cooperation between the European Union and ASEAN forward. Mr. Echle mentioned that is very important that the potential of the partnership between the European Union and ASEAN should not be forgotten in the midst of the Ukraine conflict.

At the same time, Mr. Echle reminded participants that the conflict also takes the focus away from other very important topics like the crisis in Myanmar. He expressed happiness that the conference was held in Cambodia, with a very strong commitment of the Cambodian chairmanship to ASEAN to make a difference, to improve the lives of the people of Myanmar and emphasised that it is important that with the Russia-Ukraine conflict, other conflicts around the world are not forgotten as these also need urgent solutions.

Mr. Echle then went on to talk about the EANGAGE project. This conference was a very important milestone for the EANGAGE project. He shared with the participants that the EU is happy with the progress of the project and is eager to see the results, including of the papers being presented at the conference. He also noted that there is also a lot of interest in the project outcomes from the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. Therefore, he told the fellows that their work would be very visible and seen, but that it is also prerogative of the younger generation to be a bit risky as well in their recommendations. He encouraged all the fellows think out of the box to make recommendations.

In closing, he thanked all the participants for taking the risk to travel to Siem Reap, and hoped that all the participants had an enjoyable conference. Due to the limits and capacity for the event, it was not possible to bring all the fellows together but he hoped that all fellows would be able to join the summer workshops in Berlin. He closed the conference by thanking the partners again, and looked forward to meeting all the fellows in Berlin in summer.

