

**NDG LECTURE SERIES NO.2:  
IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES  
TO NARROW THE DEVELOPMENT GAP**

15.00 – 17.00, 16 May 2013  
Angsana Room, Mezzanine Floor  
The ASEAN Secretariat

**Background**

Narrowing the development gap (NDG) within ASEAN deserves more attention to realise the ASEAN Community by 2015. The assistance to CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, VietNam) countries, for instance, needs to be stepped up to enable them to catch up with the ASEAN's other Members States, so that they can effectively participate in building the ASEAN Community and fully benefit from it.

In response to this need, ASEAN launched the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) to help the newer members develop more rapidly and thus narrow the development gap. For newer members to fully participate in and gain from regional integration, some level of assistance is required in equipping them with the capability to fulfill their commitments to carry out the measures agreed upon in building the ASEAN Community, the same commitments shared by the older members.

There is a growing number of actors involved in supporting NDG, particularly IAI, related initiatives. They come from all fronts -- Partners' and government's national and regional offices/agencies, beneficiaries, and regional institutions such as the ASEAN Secretariat, among others. How they interact with each other in delivering assistance matters to the success of development cooperation programmes and projects. To this end, development actors need to come together to come up with well-coordinated and participatory approaches that lead to designing and implementing projects that are responsive to the beneficiary countries' needs.

This Lecture will tackle modes and systems of development cooperation for NDG in ASEAN.

**Provisional Programme**

• **OPENING REMARKS**

**Mr Rony Soerakoesoemah**

Assistant Director/Head, Initiative for ASEAN Integration & Narrowing the Development Gap Division  
ASEAN Secretariat

The ASEAN Secretariat and Member States have implemented the IAI through IAI Work Plans. Currently in phase 2 of the Work Plan (2009-2012), challenges remain to ensure that IAI projects meet the needs of the respective countries in terms of their role in the national development, effectiveness in capacity building for preparing ASEAN programmes, and absorptive capacity. In operation terms improving coordination is necessary within/ among all stakeholders and partners.

• **PRESENTATION: OVERVIEW & CHALLENGES FOR NARROWING DEVELOPMENT GAPS IN THE REGION**

**Ambassador Rodolfo C Severino**

Head, ASEAN Studies Centre  
Former ASEAN Secretary-General (1998 -2002)

ASEAN Member States are working towards the goal of establishing an ASEAN Community by 2015 as symbolized by ASEAN Charter which entered into force in December 2008. The work is in progress in accordance with the "Roadmap for an ASEAN Community". However, there exist gaps in the preparedness and development among ASEAN Member States where new member states tend to be left behind. The critical challenge for ASEAN is to resolve these disparities; narrowing the gap is an important task for establishing the ASEAN Community where the benefits of ASEAN integration shall be fully realized.

- **COOPERATION MECHANISM AMONG STAKEHOLDERS FOR NARROWING THE DEVELOPMENT GAP TOWARDS ASEAN INTEGRATION – JICA’S EXPERIENCE.**

**Dr. Sachiko Ishikawa**

Senior Advisor  
Co-manager of Laos Pilot Program  
Japan International Cooperation Agency

The Government of Japan has been strengthening collaboration with ASEAN through the adoption of the “Tokyo Declaration for Japan-ASEAN Partnership” and the conclusion of the “ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP),” among other efforts. It has also assisted with ASEAN’s efforts to build an ASEAN Community through the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and the development of the Mekong area which aim to narrow the development gap between the ASEAN member states.

To accelerate these efforts by the governments, JICA and the ASEAN Secretariat agreed on the JICA-ASEAN Cooperation in June 2008 and started a comprehensive cooperation to accelerate ASEAN integration and narrowing the development gap between ASEAN Member States.

JICA has been implementing an innovative program in close collaboration with ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat responding to the recommendations made during the review of IAI Work Plan I. JICA wishes to share the concept and cooperation mechanism of the program with ASEAN member states and external partners with a purpose of further improving the program as well as accelerating the implementation of IAI WP 2.

- **PANEL DISCUSSANTS: A PERSPECTIVE AND THE EXPERIENCE OF OPERATIONALIZING REGIONAL PROGRAMMES’ AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

**Dr. Peter van Diermen**

Chief Technical adviser  
National Team for Accelerating Poverty Reduction (TNP2K)

The Work Plan for the IAI is primarily implemented at the national level. The first Work Plan was from 2002 to 2008 and the second –the current Work Plan, is from 2009 to 2015. The current Work Plan is focused around key programme areas of the ASEAN Blueprint. It addresses the specific needs of the CLMV countries and is primarily made up of actions to be implemented at the national level.

In operationalizing regional programs and frameworks at the national level, the process of implementation is both similar to many donor programs and at the same time unique. It’s unique in so far that it is driven by the ASEAN’s Blueprint, funded largely by others and includes South-South cooperation through the ASEAN-6.

Given the CLMV countries’ resource and capacity constraints, what lessons can be learned and applied in operationalizing regional programmes’ at the national level? The presentation will cover lessons and insights from designing, implementing and monitoring a number of ASEAN and non-ASEAN programmes and projects.

**OPEN SESSION: Q&A**