

## ***Session 7: Towards a New Framework***

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## **States, Regional and Global Governance**

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Governance as a concept has evolved from addressing public administration by the executive branch of national authorities to become a broader term that encompasses non-state actors as well.

With regard to Asia, however, reviews on the practice of governance in some countries pointed to a somewhat skewed distribution of benefits ranging from economic growth and prolonged hardship to widespread public dissatisfaction of reform policies. The persistent socio-economic disparities would not only constitute a threat to the national but also regional and international contexts of security. In this respect, energy security which is linked to socio-economic development warrants greater attention when it comes to the issue of governance.

While there had been diverse definitions of the term 'governance', good governance essentially refers to the ideal features including accountability of public authorities and the bureaucracy, transparency of information, clear and fair rule of law as well as open participation in key decision-making process which affects lives. The term 'effective' governance has also been used synonymously with 'good' governance, and could be categorized into national, regional and global governance.

Governance implementation had been customarily linked to economic performance of countries, with a direct relationship between good governance and economic performance. Some critics, however, charged that increasing governance could potentially stifle sustained economic growth.

With respect to four countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand – a 2004 study had shown that the adoption of international governance practices was dependent on the political dynamics of these countries, with disparate outcomes.

At the regional and global levels, ASEAN integration could serve as a case study. Challenges such as uneven socio-economic development and the conservatism of regional governments would need to be overcome in order to achieve a reasonable degree of regional and global governance.