

# RSIS NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY (NTS) *YEAR IN REVIEW 2015*

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CENTRE FOR NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES (NTS CENTRE)  
S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (RSIS)  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Dear Readers,

2015 has been a year marred by natural and man-made disasters.

Earthquakes, floods, and typhoons took away many lives. Civil wars and domestic strife continue to inflict violence and death on civilian populations. Refugees and migrants are crossing borders in greater numbers and many have perished in doing so, especially in overcrowded boats on the seas. Trans-boundary haze pollution from man-made forest fires caused disruption to people's lives and seriously harmed their health.

Greater focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief is urgently needed. Regional and national institutions need to build the expertise and capacity to approach humanitarian crises, while countries need to come together to recalibrate their joint approaches towards these challenges. We need greater innovation and imagination to do more for the alleviation of human suffering. In particular, criminal activities perpetuated by the unscrupulous in human trafficking must be severely dealt with. The international community must act in unison and in accordance with the rule of law.

RSIS is pleased to be at the forefront of the discussion and research on non-traditional security (NTS) and has been the first to approach humanitarian issues from an NTS perspective with the launch of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) programme in 2015.

The essays and issues covered in this Year in Review will provide a snapshot of the work RSIS has undertaken on NTS. We hope that this publication will be useful to all readers and will help to increase our appreciation and knowledge of the impact of NTS and the way forward in tackling NTS threats to human society.

**Ong Keng Yong**

*Executive Deputy Chairman*

*S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)*

*Singapore*

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF CENTRE

Dear Readers,

The year 2015 is a significant milestone for global and regional institutions. It marks the year of the ASEAN Community 2015 and the target year for the achievement of our Millennium Development Goals. 2015 also marks the end of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) 10-year Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) as well as the unveiling of the new global development goals. Hence, it is timely to take stock of the challenges we face and where we have come in achieving our targets.

In 2015, several significant issues came into the limelight. Myanmar was hit by a flood crisis in August while Nepal was hit by a major earthquake in April, which killed thousands and flattened villages. Europe and Southeast Asia faced migrant crises, with many stranded at sea. President Benigno Aquino pushed for the passing of the Bangsamoro Basic Law. South Korea was hit by the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome. Africa was declared free of polio. Countries also submitted their emission targets to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in preparation for the post-2020 climate agreement.

Many issues are transnational, and require regional cooperation and solutions. They also span a range of disasters and non-military threats. It is thus essential to understand the interlinkages between issues and seek the participation of various stakeholders in safeguarding stability and security.

This Year in Review focuses on 2015 regional and global targets, as well as the common threats that affect states and societies across the region; from humanitarian crises to food and energy security. We hope that you will find the articles useful as we reflect on the events of 2015 and be mindful of future challenges ahead.

**Associate Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony**

*Head*

*Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies*

*S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)*

*Singapore*

# Key NTS Events 2015

At least 10 people were killed and more than 200,000 people were evacuated from their homes during **unprecedented floods across Malaysia**. Military and civil organisations worked to send immediate relief to those affected but as the monsoon returns, many in Kelantan are still living in tents.

**Clashes between government forces and members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)**, in areas held by rebel groups near Mamasapano town, southern Philippines left 44 police commandos dead.

President Joko Widodo declared that **Indonesia will stop sending its women abroad** to work as maids to preserve the country's dignity and ensure their safety. This, however, does not help the plight of those already working overseas without legal protection from harm.

**Myanmar's Parliament passes a referendum** that allows temporary national card holders (two thirds of whom are Rohingya) to take part in a future referendum on constitutional amendments.

Representatives from 187 UN member states adopted the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030** during the UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, with 7 global targets on the reduction of the impact of disasters over the next 15 years.

The **plankton boom that hit 55 out of 117 of Singapore's floating fish farms** resulted in about 600 tonnes of fish losses, which is more than 10 percent of the country's annual production, with total losses amounting to almost \$5 million.

A **7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal** on 25 April with its epicentre between Kathmandu and the city of Pokhara. More than 5,000 people died, tens of thousands were evacuated and communications and transport were disrupted across the country.

**Laos introduces a vaccine against Japanese Encephalitis**, an illness spread through mosquitoes common in Southeast Asian rural areas. This is the first Chinese-manufactured vaccine to receive pre-qualification for international use by the World Health Organization.

Malaysian and Indonesian authorities offered shelter to about 7,000 **Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants left adrift at sea** by human traffickers. Acehnese fishermen alone rescued 1,759 migrants. Camps in Thai and Malaysian jungles were found to be the transit points for these refugees, with evidence of torture, starvation and mass deaths.

36 die and 186 are infected by the **Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)** coronary virus in South Korea. The South Korean government was criticised for its inability to contain the outbreak as most of the infections occurred at health centres.

A **6.0-magnitude quake hit Ranau, Sabah** in East Malaysia, killing 18 people. Since the quake, the areas around Mt. Kinabalu have suffered acute water shortages as rivers turned to mud from massive landslides and water catchment areas were severely damaged.

**North Korea experienced the worst drought in a century**, with rainfall going down to the lowest levels since 1961 in some areas. This damaged the spring crop of rice and prevented further planting, adding to local food insecurity.

**China submitted its new climate action plan** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with a goal to achieve a peak in emissions in 2030, reduce the carbon intensity by 60-65 percent below 2005 levels and increase its share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption by 20 percent.

January

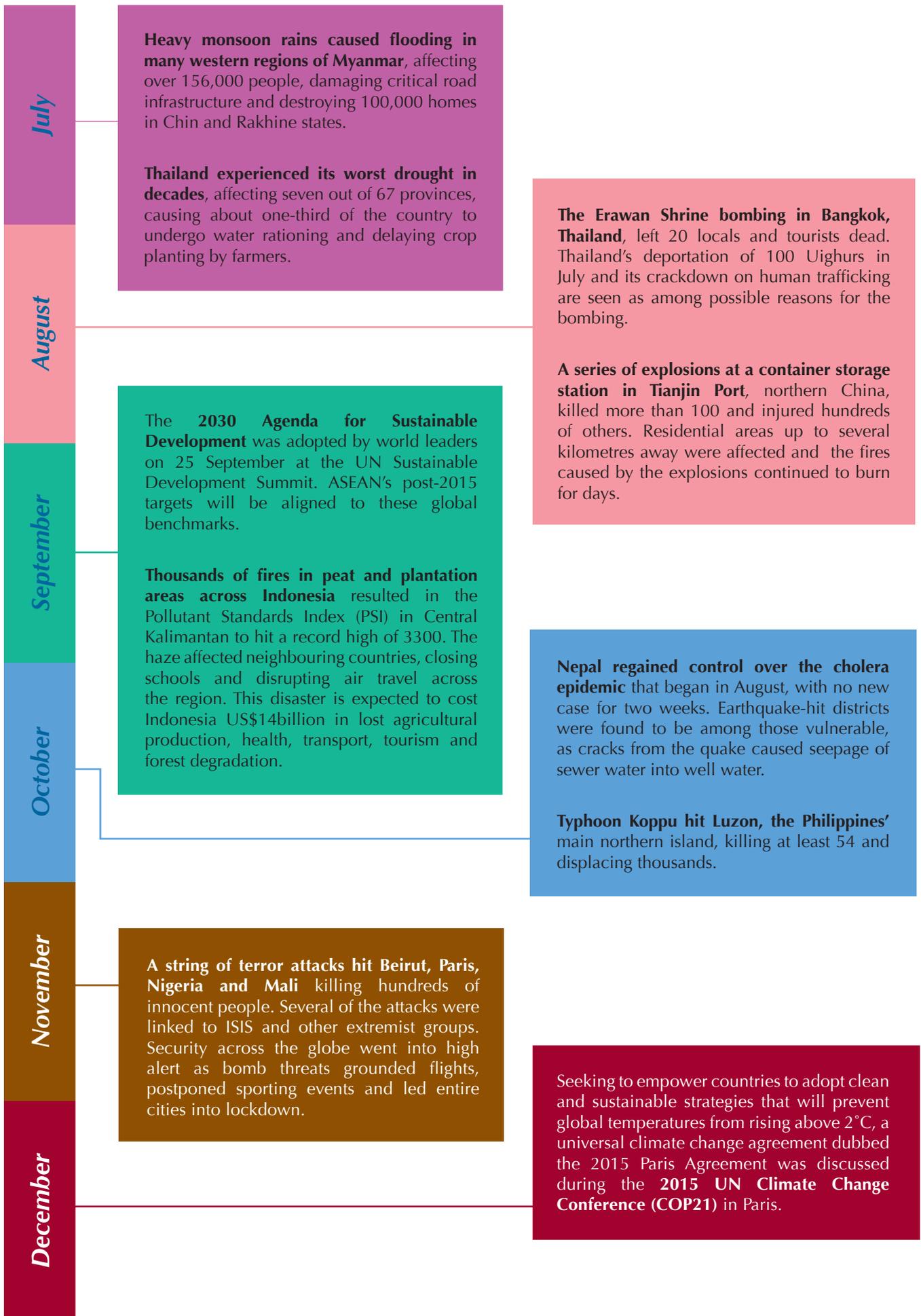
February

March

April

May

June



# Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Managing Expectations

By Mely Caballero-Anthony

After two years of global consultations, the 193 member states of the United Nations adopted the much anticipated Sustainable Development Goals on 25 September 2015. The SDGs are the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are due to be concluded by the end



Millennium Development Goals  
Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

of 2015. Adopted in 2000, the MDGs set out a series of 8 specific targets to eradicate poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat major diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and establish global partnership for development. The MDGs became a rallying point for the global community to end poverty in its many dimensions. As it nears its completion, the achievements of the MDGs have been mixed. As noted in the UN's MDG Report of 2015, while significant progress has been achieved in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger with the number of people declining by more than half—falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015, around 800 million still live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than US\$1.25 a day. Progress in other areas also remains uneven across regions and countries. Most of the extremely poor people are still largely found in certain parts of the world. Big gaps also exist between the poorest and the richest households and

between rural and urban areas, leaving millions of people far behind. For instance, while the number of out-of-school children of primary school age has decreased by almost half to 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000, the children from the poorest households are four times more likely to be out of school compared with those in the richest household. While the proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half from 23.3 percent in the early 1990s to 12.0 percent in 2015, children from the poorest 20 percent of households are more than twice as likely to be stunted compared with those from the wealthiest 20 percent.

Other assessments are equally salient. Despite significant progress in promoting gender equality and empowering women, discrimination remains. Globally, women are still disadvantaged in the labour market with only half of working-age women participating in the labour market compared to three quarters of working-age men that are in the labour force. While gains have been achieved in protecting the environment, there are also persistent problems with regard to millions of hectares of deforested areas, overexploitation of marine fish stocks and water scarcity affecting 40 percent of people globally.

In charting out the post-2015 development goals, the newly crafted SDGs are aimed at building on the momentum of what the MDGs have achieved. But it goes further to outline a new set of 17 goals with 169 corresponding targets. The unveiling of the SDGs drew mixed responses, raising some concerns about how the global community will implement what has been deemed as a rather unwieldy set of global goals.



Sustainable Development Goals  
Source: www.un.org

## 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Too broad vs too narrow

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has referred to the 17-part SDG as a 'bold vision for sustainable development'. Similarly, the UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 that adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda declared that the global goals were 'unprecedented in scope and significance... setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision.'

In a global environment plagued by numerous development and security issues, the significant expansion of SDG goals from the more narrow MDGs reflect the different challenges confronting states and communities across the globe. Supporters of expanded SDGs point to the multiple, cross-cutting issues brought on by rapid urbanisation, climate change, water and food scarcity, environmental degradation, pandemics affecting different societies, on top of the pressing need to address rising inequality and injustice. As noted by some observers, the proliferation of global goals reflects a key lesson of development; context matters and different places have different needs.

Two notable features in the SDGs are the specific mention of the need to combat climate change and protect the planet (SDG goals 13-15), and the inclusion—for the first time of issues of peace, security and justice. The call to protect the planet's ecosystems has become more urgent than ever as the varying effects of disaster-related climate change are being felt across the globe. Over the last 4 decades, the UN Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP) puts the economic losses of natural disasters to over US\$2.3 trillion, with the Asia-Pacific reporting US\$1.15 trillion of that total cost. Further, the UNISDR estimates that current losses from disasters are between US\$250 to US\$300 billion a year. Such a staggering increase in economic losses threatens to wipe off any gains from economic growth and puts a brake on sustainable development, job creation and poverty reduction.

It is also significant that there is now greater recognition of the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies underpinned by access to justice and effective and accountable institutions (SDG goal 16). It has been observed that fragile and conflict ridden states have not achieved a single MDG. It is also in conflict affected regions that almost 80 percent of the world's poor live. With high incidences of conflict come

extreme violence, death, diseases, child abuse, hunger and misery. In his speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon argued that the kinds of suffering faced by 100 million people today are unprecedented and ‘not seen in a generation’. He highlighted the fact that at least 60 million people have been forced to flee their homes and their countries, braving difficult conditions and facing the risks of violence, oppression, human trafficking, rejection and isolation.

That the SDGs targets have now been set to include the rule of law, good governance, participatory democracy, respect for human rights, and eradication of discrimination, among others, underscore the fact that failure to do so will continue to undermine efforts at alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development.

## Managing Expectations

Although having more SDG goals are arguably better than less goals that do not address critical issues, the concern about managing and implementing 17 goals and 169 targets are equally daunting. Of critical concern is how to generate funding to support the goals. The UN estimates that the cost of achieving the SDGs will be about US\$3.3 – 4.5 trillion a year of public and private money. While the cost is staggering, the UN appears optimistic that such funding can be generated through a massive global campaign of building private and public partnership. Needless to say, the role of the private sector in filling in the funding gap is critical if the SDGs were to make an impact. Aside from actual financial contribution, the private sector can certainly do more in investing and applying its research and development capabilities and innovations to supporting and scaling up SDG challenges. To be sure, governments alone cannot ensure that the SDGs are achieved. As pointed out by Lise Kingo, Executive Director of the UN Global Compact—the largest global platform for business engagement on the

SDGs, “businesses today are expected to be part of the solution to our world’s great challenges—from climate and water crises, to inequality and poverty...[thus] the SDGs provide a platform to show responsibility, pursue opportunity and innovation, and inspire other businesses to get on board.”

Aside from funding issues, measuring the impact and success of SDGs require many other stakeholders to be part of the process. This is in fact reflected in the 17<sup>th</sup> goal of the SDGs which is about strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising global partnership for sustainable development. These require no less than the participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working together with governments and businesses, as well as researchers and experts in the field to carry out the massive task of identifying indicators and collecting data for each of the 169 targets that fall under the 17 goals. Given the mammoth tasks ahead of crafting mechanisms to measure and implement the new SDG targets, not to mention the challenge of integrating these goals into national policies, the much desired inclusiveness further necessitates a steep learning curve for all stakeholders concerned if we are to have a chance of meeting the ‘future we want’.



Children fetch water from a river in Laos.  
Photo credit: Asian Development Bank via Flickr Creative Commons

# NTS SNAPSHOT: CLIMATE CHANGE

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has flagged Southeast Asia as one of the most vulnerable regions to the adverse impact of climate

## Extreme Weather Events

Increasing frequency and intensity of weather events like typhoons and droughts

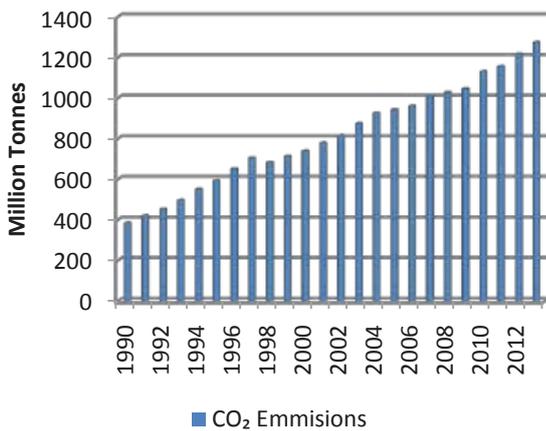
## Increased Temperatures

Expected to increase vector borne diseases and adversely affect agriculture, fisheries and food production

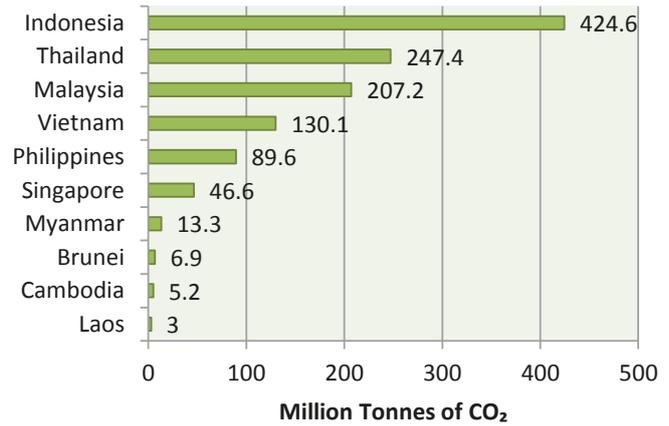
## Sea Level Rise

Negative impacts on coastal environments especially due to greater flooding, inundation and salt water intrusion. This is likely to increase the displacement of people and significant damage to property

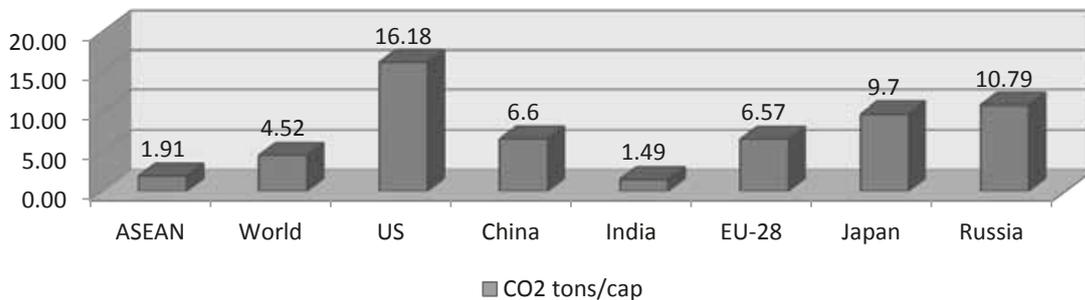
### ASEAN CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Fuel Combustion



### CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Fuel Combustion (2013)



### CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions (in tons/capita, 2013)



Approximately **15%** of carbon released in the environment is due to **deforestation** and change in land use.

**Agriculture** is said to contribute **1/3** of all **global greenhouse emissions**. Crop and livestock production produces **5 billion tonnes** of **CO<sub>2</sub>** every year.

Sources: IEA, IPCC, Enerdata, FAO, Nature

# ASEAN and the Transboundary Haze Pollution

By Raman Letchumanan



Satellite image of 2015 Southeast Asian haze.  
Photo credit: NASA

The Preambular Section of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (“Haze Agreement”) ends with this conviction: that the ASEAN Member States (AMS) as Parties are “convinced that an essential means to achieve such collective action – to prevent transboundary haze pollution - is the conclusion and **effective implementation** of an Agreement”. However, 12 years after its adoption and implementation, the transboundary haze pollution issue is yet to be resolved. Severe incidences of land and forest fires and the resulting haze episodes are strongly correlated to adverse weather conditions. Human interventions have not had much of an impact to mitigate it, though numerous regional and national initiatives have been implemented under the Haze Agreement. Climate change has compounded this further by causing unpredictable weather conditions with prolonged and severe dry seasons.

The past decade of the implementation of the Haze Agreement can best be described as a period of learning and experimenting with the various provisions of the Agreement. It was also a period where the countries have moved on from denial and inaction towards a more

cooperative regional behaviour and a better understanding of the complexity of the problem. The key role of the Haze Agreement in galvanising AMS and various other stakeholders to collectively tackle this issue has become more recognised. The Haze Agreement has also made the AMS more responsible for their actions, and the people have grown to demand greater accountability in addressing the problem.

## Time for Reflection, Renewed Commitment and Enhanced Actions

It is time for reflection on what works and does not, to build upon the successful lessons and experiences, to avoid pitfalls and more importantly to move collectively and progressively towards addressing the transboundary haze issue. This renewed commitment comes at an opportune time based on the following:

- (i) Indonesia’s ratification of the Haze Agreement in September 2014, making all ten AMS parties to the Agreement. As the country with the largest land mass and greatly affected by land and forest fires, full participation of Indonesia is key to ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of the Agreement.
- (ii) ASEAN adopted its post-2015 Agenda this year, outlining its vision and mission in building the next phase of the ASEAN Community for the next ten years. A renewed commitment and serious collaborative action to prevent haze, which has been the most severe environmental issue in the region, will generate greater confidence in ASEAN acting as one Community.
- (iii) The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a new global agreement on climate change have recently been

adopted. ASEAN can leverage on more effective implementation of the Haze Agreement by tackling forest fires and haze to contribute to these inter-related global environmental and development issues.

ASEAN ministers responsible for the environment are rightly calling for a Road Map towards a Vision for a Haze-free ASEAN at this opportune time.



*Yellow skies in Southeast Asia  
Photo credit: Aulia Erlangga/ CIFOR*

## Road Map towards a Haze-free ASEAN

The following ten recommendations are proposed as key elements of the proposed Road Map to enable ASEAN to move into a more enhanced phase of effective implementation of the Haze Agreement, with all AMS as full members, towards a transboundary haze-free ASEAN by 2020.

These recommendations embody a holistic, comprehensive and inclusive framework, in line with the Non-Traditional Security (NTS) approach, involving multiple interrelated sectors such as environment, climate change, resilience and sustainable development, disaster management, food and water security, sustainable community livelihood, and sustainable land-use planning and management.

### **(i) Declare and work towards making ASEAN a transboundary haze-free region by 2020**

ASEAN should declare and make a firm commitment to ensure that the region shall

be transboundary haze-free by 2020. Such a commitment will demonstrate political will and focus attention on instituting appropriate measures under the Haze Agreement to achieve the goal in a time-bound manner.

### **(ii) Fully implement the ASEAN Program on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems 2014-2020 (ASMPE)**

Peatlands fires contribute about 90% of the transboundary haze pollution in ASEAN. AMS have now recognized the importance of peatlands not only for reducing transboundary haze but more importantly for sustainable community and commercial benefits. Ministers responsible for the environment have adopted the ASMPE with six targets to be achieved by 2020. The implementation of the ASMPE should be based on a longer-term planning and programmatic approach, characterised by effective multi-stakeholder partnerships and enabling cross-learning and best practices synergies, in achieving sustainable peatlands ecosystems management.



*Devastation in Sebangau National Park, Indonesia.  
Photo credit: Aulia Erlangga/ CIFOR*

### **(iii) Undertake concerted national efforts based on the Haze Agreement for the mutual benefit of each AMS and the region**

The Haze Agreement emphasises national level actions as the essential means to prevent haze, to be supported by concerted regional and international cooperation. The Agreement also emphasises sustainable development as the basis for tackling the root causes that contribute to haze. Hence, AMS should view the Haze Agreement in its proper context, and consider it as

a platform to address pressing national environmental, social and economic issues through regional and international cooperation.



*Indonesian military attempt to douse the flames around Palangkaraya, Kalimantan.  
Photo credit: Aulia Erlangga/ CIFOR*

**(iv) Enhance and implement an effective Work Program for the Haze Agreement consisting of both regional and corresponding national activities**

ASEAN should develop and implement a comprehensive Work Program for the Haze Agreement, consisting of both regional activities and related national activities. After all, the Agreement mandates national governments to act first to prevent and control the fires in their territory. Furthermore, regular reporting of national measures and issues, and cooperation or assistance rendered to assist governments, will ensure ownership and buy-in by the governments of the Haze Agreement.

**(v) Immediately operationalise the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control as the main operational entity of the Haze Agreement**

ASEAN should operationalise the Haze Centre immediately, which Indonesia has agreed to host, as the main operational entity of the Haze Agreement as provided for in Article 5. This operating entity is essential to ensure that all the provisions of the Agreement are effectively implemented. It creates visibility for the Agreement, and acts as an independent entity and catalyst

for governments and other stakeholders to interact and collaborate on the necessary operational measures. The Haze Fund needs to be adequately resourced to meet the costs of operations of the Centre, and for the implementation of the Agreement.



*Children wear masks as they play in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan.  
Photo credit: Aulia Erlangga/ CIFOR*

**(vi) Prioritise appropriate national legislative instruments for better enforcement, compliance and where necessary punitive actions**

The effectiveness of the Agreement depends on appropriate national laws and regulations for its implementation. The Haze Agreement enables AMS to benchmark their national laws and regulations against their obligations under the Agreement, and to enhance their enforcement capacity and capability, and overall governance and management.

**(vii) Further enhance the monitoring and surveillance actions emphasising early warning and better forecast modelling**

Efforts should be continued to enhance haze monitoring systems such as hotspots mapping, a predictive Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS), haze trajectory modelling, and the Haze Monitoring System as useful tools to identify incidences of fires, to forecast fire danger areas, to monitor movement of haze, and to identify and take enforcement actions on perpetrators of fires and haze.

**(viii) Shift from emergency response towards better prevention and preparedness in mitigating fires**

The Haze Agreement contains extensive provisions on national emergency response, and joint emergency response and assistance in case an affected country is not able to tackle forest fires on its own. As required under the Agreement, it is the responsibility of respective member states to control any fires within their region. AMS should be properly prepared based on a possible worst case scenario. Land and forest fires can flare up and spread quickly and widely, especially in remote and inaccessible places. In such situations, urban fire-fighting equipment or techniques are ineffective. Therefore, fires are best put out early before they get out of control.

**(ix) Proactively and effectively involve all stakeholders – plantation companies, financial/development institutions, private sector, consumers, communities and NGOs**

The Haze Agreement, through Article 3(5), mandates Parties, in addressing transboundary haze pollution, to involve all stakeholders, including local communities, non-governmental organisations, farmers and private enterprises. Governments

should mobilise these stakeholders in an effective manner and create a proactive partnership that allows them to mutually assist each other in resolving the problem. Community-based efforts, in particular, should be intensified, not just for reducing haze-causing fires, but as part of a comprehensive plan to uplift the socio-economic status of the communities.

**(x) Enhance implementation of obligations of AMS to related global agreements through leveraging complementary efforts under the Haze Agreement.**

Fires and haze are just symptoms of a larger issue concerning not only the environment, but also the broader social, economic and political dimensions. Wild fires release huge amount of greenhouse gases, and can wipe out vast tracts of forest, destroy biodiversity and unique ecosystems such as peatlands. Therefore, the Haze Agreement contributes directly towards achieving the objectives of several global agreements related to climate change, biodiversity, forestry etc. The Haze Agreement therefore adds value to global environmental efforts through its recognition of the root causes of fires and haze and its emphasis on preventive actions.

# Addressing the Nutrition Challenge: Strengthening National and Local Institutions

By Jonatan Lassa

## Transforming our World

On September 25th 2015, 193 governments ratified a new voluntary resolution, **Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development**. There are 17 Global Goals to achieve in the next 15 years. One of the goals (Goal 2) is *to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*. The nutrition targets by 2030 include:

- End hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- End all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on reducing incidents of stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

These nutrition targets are welcome as world leaders agree to set high goals that will allow millions to be lifted out of poverty and hunger.

Goal 1 is to *end poverty in all its forms everywhere* as indicated by the zero poverty target. Poverty and malnutrition are inextricably linked. Children of households under the poverty line are more likely to experience malnutrition. Better nutrition can increase household productivity once the child becomes an adult. This goal entails that no-one will be living under the poverty line (currently equivalent to \$1.25 a day) by 2030. It is also important to note that these targets must be met by reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

Goal 3 is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. This goal is set *to reduce the global maternal mortality*



Source: Better nutrition for better health  
Photo credit: Alex Bradford

ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births and end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

These goals are less likely to be achieved if the nutrition target is not achieved. International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) data shows that almost half of all under-five deaths are linked to undernutrition and the failure to address stunting today will eventually lead to adults being more vulnerable to non-communicable diseases thereafter, resulting in lower future adult productivity.



Ensuring nutrition in the young.  
Photo credit: Minustah

## Challenges

The ambitious targets set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be welcomed and supported. However, real life implementation scenarios for these targets must be clearly created. The good news is that globally, we have seen a significant reduction in undernourishment over the last 25 years. A general assessment of undernourishment in developing regions has shown a decline from 23.3 percent in 1990-1992 to 12.9 percent in 2014-2016. In the ASEAN region, FAO data indicates that there has been a significant reduction of undernourishment in children from 37.5 million (30.6 percent) in the 1990s to 60.5 million (9.6 percent) in 2014 (Annual change is -2.6 percent). In addition, in overall developing regions, underweight

prevalence declined from 27.4 percent in 1990-1992 to 16.6 percent in 2014-2016.

However, this progress varies from country to country. In addition, the reduction in undernourishment and underweight prevalence do not reveal a complete picture of the world's progress in ensuring nutrition security. Some other measures are necessary to boost poor people's access to balanced diets and quality of living so as to avoid wasting and stunting in children, as well as underweight prevalence. Based on observations from World Bank data on malnutrition prevalence (height for age - percentage of children under 5), in ASEAN, the annual rate in 2010 was 40.9 (a reduction from 43.7 percent in 2005). This indicates that on average, there is a reduction rate of 0.47 percent annually which suggests that under a business as usual (BAU) scenario, it will take 87 years for Cambodia to reach a zero malnutrition target i.e. after 2080. With 1 percent as the annual target, it will only be able to achieve the 2030 goal in 2055.



Supporting smallholder farmers for sustainability.  
Photo credit: Don-Pixel

Assuming that failures in other Sustainable Development Goals would not affect nutrition targets (Goal 2), by using the BAU scenario, based on the World Bank's malnutrition prevalence data (height for age - percentage of children under 5), Indonesia would need 59 years to achieve the 2030 target; a 44 year delay. Under the BAU Scenario, Lao PDR (annual reduction rate 0.63 percent) will only be able to achieve its 2030 Sustainable Development Target in nutrition by 2055. With 1 percent annual target in malnutrition reduction, Lao PDR

would only achieve its 2030 target by 2058. The Philippines is likely to experience significant delays in eradicating stunting by 2030 as it currently experiences an increase in stunting from 32.3 percent in 2008 to 33.6 in 2011. While Thailand's stunting case indicates an increase from 15.7 percent in 2006 to 16.3 percent in 2012.

Nutrition data is still difficult to access in many countries. Most ASEAN countries do not have regular nutrition monitoring systems. In general, stunting remains a sustainable development challenge for ASEAN countries. The Indonesian Ministry of Health recently released a report on basic health problems and trends, *Risikedas* (end 2014). According to the report, of any three children one meets in Indonesia today, one must be stunted or dwarfed; and in every five children in Indonesia, two must be under-nourished. The prevalence of under-nutrition in Indonesia increased to 19.6 percent in 2013 (compared to 18.4 percent in 2007). It is important to note that there are clearly identified hotspots of under-nutrition in poorer regions such as East Nusa Tenggara and West Papua. In East Nusa Tenggara province, of any two children born, one must be stunted.

## **Crafting Institutional Architecture at National and Local Levels**

The 2014 Global Nutrition Report argues that good nutrition is the bedrock of human well-being. Crafting political commitments at the global scale such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is therefore the first step to achieving global well-being. The question is how do we craft political goals at local and national levels? The 2014 Global Nutrition Report has identified a number of useful points such as:

- Allocate more resources to investments in nutrition.
- All relevant stakeholders (donors, governments, civil society and the private sector) must be held accountable for meeting their commitments to improve nutrition.
- Develop targets or norms for spending on nutrition including tracking stakeholders' spending and allocation on nutrition as part of a nutrition accountability mechanism. This includes creating bolder commitments to track financial resources for all nutrition stakeholders.
- Systematic development of nutrition monitoring and data system. This includes establishing nutrition baselines at local and national levels, followed by ensuring that there is a monitoring system in place, with monitoring done on a regular basis.

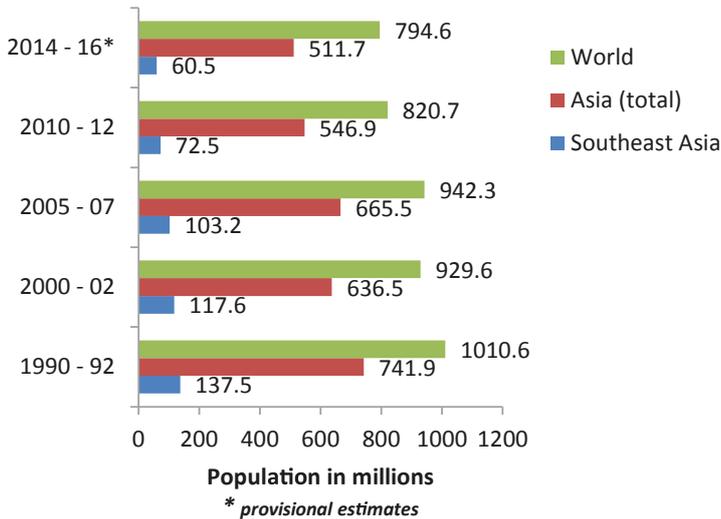
It has been recognised that political commitment to improve nutrition could be at a momentary high but this sentiment is often volatile. Eradicating hunger and malnutrition has been more difficult than inventing new technology and knowledge and policy innovation. The knowledge and technology needed to solve hunger and malnutrition exists in the world today. Over the last 50 years, problems surrounding food security and nutrition have not been the result of a lack of technology and knowledge. In most cases, it is the lack of good policies and institutions rooted in an absence of (good) governance, persistently poor institutional mechanisms and a dearth of political commitment that often leads to enduring hunger and malnutrition.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals commits to bringing a minimum quality of life to any person regardless of the status and background of that person. It is also important to note that the most critical time for investing in the sustainable development of an individual occurs within the first 1000-1500 days of the person's life. These are the times when investments in nutrition would yield better life outcomes that will last not only during the person's life cycle, but across generations. It is thus important to take extra care of children under 5 so as to achieve sustainable nutritional goals in particular, and SDGs in general.

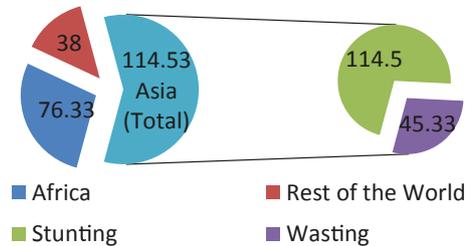
# NTS SNAPSHOT: FOOD SECURITY

It is estimated that **805 million** (or 1 in 9) people in the world suffered from **chronic undernourishment** in 2012-2014

## Food Insecurity

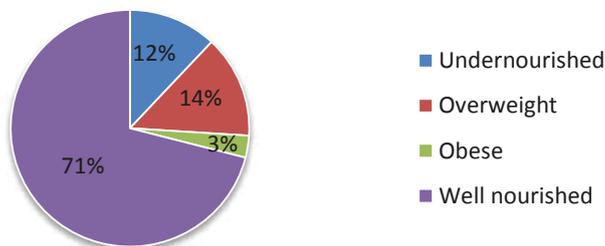


## Children and Hunger (in millions, 2013)

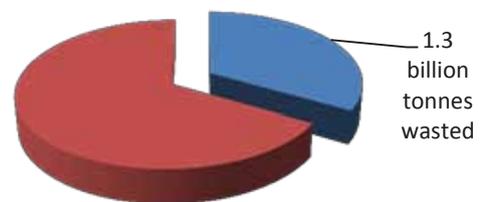


The world produces enough food to feed everyone. The principal problem is that many in the world still do not have sufficient income to purchase (or land to grow) enough food.

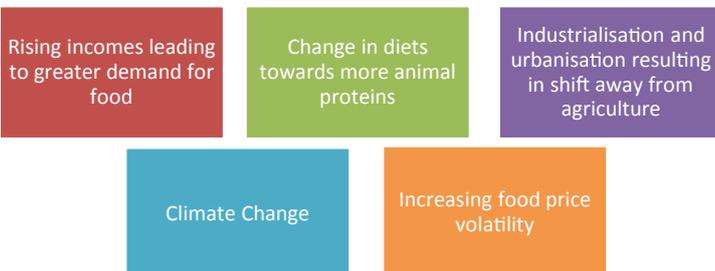
## Food Security in Southeast Asia (in % of total population, 2013)



Approximately a third of the food produced globally ends up wasted



## Emerging risks for food security in Asia



Close to **one billion** people in the world are considered **overweight** (the same number as undernourished). **300 million** of them are considered **obese**.

By **2050**, more than **half of irrigated rice in Asia** is expected to suffer **5%-25% losses** due to the impact of climate change

Sources: FAO, IFPRI, WHO, ADB

# Gender Equity and ASEAN Post-2015

By Tamara Nair

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995. At the Beijing conference, participants from around the world came together to better the future of women; to build a world that allows them the dignity to pursue their dreams and live their lives in systems that granted, and in fact, encouraged equality, peace, tolerance and acceptance. Two decades have passed and in light of ASEAN post-2015, it is time to take stock of how far we have come in Southeast Asia to address women's rights as universal human rights and how much we have achieved.

## Regional Stocktaking

ASEAN has been active in empowering women in areas of concern such as literacy and health. As a regional body it has done much to promote and protect the rights of women through various mechanisms. All member states have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Moreover, the Southeast Asian Women's Caucus on ASEAN, which is a network of organisations that engage ASEAN on issues surrounding women's right to equality and opportunities, is an active voice in the region. In addition, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) has become a platform to engage in dialogue with civil society partners on issues and challenges of great concern in the region – violence against both women and children.

By implementing new laws and policies and reviewing older ones to incorporate issues of equality and universal human rights, the governments of ASEAN have taken concrete, actionable steps to protect women and girls



Scene at the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum held in Huairou, China as part of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China on 4-15 September 1995.

Photo credit: Milton Grant

against many forms of violence, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence and human trafficking. Despite the acknowledgement of issues of inequality, and acting upon these through legislation, policies and programmes, ASEAN still has quite a way to go before any form of violence against women can be abolished.

## Vulnerability Still Exists

Women and girls in the region are still vulnerable to human insecurities. Vulnerability is multifaceted and a result of cultural, economic and political factors that are specific to particular regions. The level of vulnerability determines the degree of 'freedom' a woman has, and thus her exposure to certain insecurities, for example, reduced food consumption and nutritional intake, fewer economic opportunities, limited access to specific health facilities and advice, and even low participation rates in local and national politics. By extension, increased vulnerability also spells reduced abilities in coping and recovering from traumatic incidences and hence lowered resilience of society as a whole.

The very term 'disaster' takes on a whole new dimension for women, many of whom continue to suffer post-disaster at the hands of their own men folk, from authorities sent in to help and from a system that has not given greater consideration to the special needs of women and girls. Research presented by the Royal Geographical Society outlines how more women than men perish, both directly and indirectly, as a result of natural disasters. This effect is strongest in countries with very low social and economic rights for women.

From already having fewer options than men at 'normal' times to prolonged hardships after a disaster, women and girls suffer significantly longer and hence have longer physical, psychological and emotional recovery times. Southeast Asia is one of the more disaster-prone regions in the world. This points to the urgent need for policy makers, national and international organisations, local governments, and in fact, any agency involved in humanitarian assistance, to develop policies that spell out better strategies to address the special needs of women in the wake of large-scale natural disasters.

Even women who have found a means of establishing financial security can be vulnerable. No example better reflects this than Indonesian President Joko Widodo's plans to stop sending women abroad to work as maids. Such actions will have negative effects not only on the families of these women but on the economy as well, considering how remittances from foreign domestic workers are quite substantial. For example, according to an International Organisation for Migration study, remittances from Indonesian migrant workers (of which three-quarters are women) reached USD\$6.6 billion in 2008 and this figure has steadily increased over the years, according to the World Bank, to more than USD\$7 billion in 2012. By 2017, Indonesia plans to stop sending unskilled labour overseas, especially the

female domestic worker to ensure their safety. Such misguided patriarchal values and political motives, disguised as issues of national dignity throw a wrench in these women's financial security and stability. What is needed is not a 'knee-jerk' political response but rather the creation of good regulatory and monitoring systems.

The absence of effective representation that addresses specific gender-related issues, including food, health and economic securities of women, will have adverse effects on a country's development. For example, Cambodia's very low numbers of female parliamentarians due to the lack of suitable candidates has its roots in low female literacy levels. One of the biggest concerns then would be to ensure equal education levels between men and women. As Nobel Laureate, Malala Yousafzai puts it, "one child, one teacher, one book, one pen, can change the world." And this is so much more important for girls; to even the odds stacked up against them.

## Beyond Economic Integration

It has been repeatedly demonstrated over a long period that empowered women bring about empowered societies. Despite numerous and widespread efforts at gender mainstreaming in health, education, and politics, among other sectors, we still live



*Indonesian migrant workers in Dubai Airport. Despite hardship overseas, many women choose to leave their homes in search of greater financial security.  
Photo credit: Andrey Deriabin*

in a world defined by deep divides that restricts women's access to opportunities. As ASEAN moves forward in its goal to build a regional community, it must first and foremost ensure that its model of regionalism does not compromise women's or, in fact, human rights. The single market envisioned by regional leaders may promote trade and economic growth but it may very well be at the expense of women, who do not, at the moment, have equal access to the economy or its spoils.

Unfortunately, despite its fast growing economies and rapid development, Southeast Asia 'boasts' a very high incidence of violence against women. A World Health Organization study reveals that 37 per cent of women in Southeast Asia (similar to some African and eastern Mediterranean states) experience some form of gender-based violence during their lifetime. Although ASEAN has taken

action through legislation and policies to reduce these numbers, it is important to acknowledge other forms of 'violence' that are perpetrated on women (and those of disadvantaged communities). Limited access to economic opportunities, disadvantages in the labour force and low representation at high level decision-making bodies, are all internationally recognised forms of violence against women. And they need to be recognised as such at a regional level if ASEAN aims to achieve a regional community. To not do so would be to continue within existing systems that prioritise economic growth over human development, when in fact these two are not mutually exclusive.

Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduced this year, the goal to end hunger, the goal to ensure healthy lives, the goal to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water, and the

*Lost voices of Tibetan women. The Tibetan Women's Delegation at to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995  
Photo credit: Tibetan Women's Association*

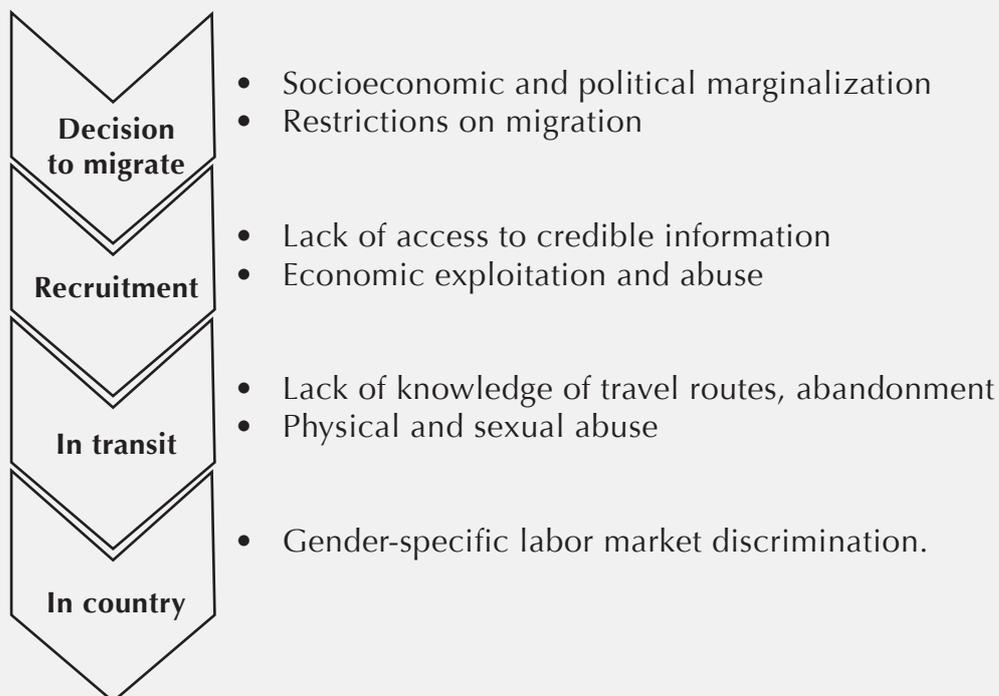


goals to ensure sustainable use of natural resources all require effective and long-term involvement of women. That is not to say other goals can be met with minimum involvement of women. As a matter of fact, the SDGs will not be met with any success without equal partnership. The Southeast Asian Women’s Caucus on ASEAN has gone so far as to comment that the vision of an ASEAN Community will stand as a barrier to achieving these goals in this region as the focus is on economic integration as a way to economic growth and not very much else.

Any form of prescriptive response to gender inequality should aim to clearly recognise the issues at hand, to reduce exposure to vulnerability and to increase coping strategies and build resilience. This should be attempted through both public and private means. This demands a type of regionalism that is not only focussed on economic integration but one which is also based on social justice, human rights, reducing the disparities between rich and poor, and inequalities between man and woman. It requires a revolutionary type of regionalism; one that so far has not been attempted by ASEAN.

**Disasters have a gender aspect:** More women than men perish as a result of both direct and indirect impacts of natural disasters. Disaster risk reduction now focuses on gender specific risks to prevent such occurrences.

#### ISSUES FACED BY ASEAN WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS<sup>a</sup>



Source:

a) *Managing Labour Migration in ASEAN: Concerns for Women Migrant Workers* (UN Women)

# Inclusive and Sustainable Development in ASEAN

By Serina Rahman

This year was pivotal for ASEAN. The ASEAN Community was announced at the November ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur and member countries must now move swiftly to make the dream a full reality by 2020. With the evolution of the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ASEAN has also committed to aligning its targets to this broader global benchmark.

As one of the fastest growing regional economies in the world, there has been an increasing awareness of the need for growth to be inclusive and effectively reduce poverty in order to be truly sustainable. On paper several regional agreements outline ASEAN's commitment to inclusivity and sustainability; placing the people at the centre of its economic goals and highlighting the need for equal opportunities, human development, reduced poverty gaps and regional connectivity.



Coastal hillside logging and decimation for development.  
Photo credit: Serina Rahman

## How has ASEAN Fared in terms of Inclusive Development?

The MDG 2015 progress reports showed an 80 percent decrease in extreme poverty rates in Southeast Asia to only 7 percent since 1990 (benchmarked against a US\$1.25 per day poverty line). The percentage of the population in urban slums has also decreased by 14 percent from 1990 to 27 percent in 2015.

These figures are positive, but the Asian Development Bank (ADB) argues that the region is better suited to a combined poverty line that incorporates the region's vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change, economic crises, food insecurity and population growth. This revised benchmark reveals that the region actually has a 32.4 percent poverty rate (compared to 6.9 percent based on the US\$1.25 calculation), with an estimated 184.71 million people in the region living below the poverty line (compared to 39.23 million based on the previous calculation).

In the 2015 Inclusive Growth and Development Report by the World Economic Forum, some issues that were highlighted for the region included a lack of adequate social safety net, the need for greater gender equality in the workforce (in terms of women's participation and the pay gap) and inadequate access to education for all. One other issue that was highlighted was that productivity gains do not necessarily translate into better pay. This means that economic growth benefits only business owners, and may not trickle down to salaried staff.

An ADB working paper published this year on urbanisation for inclusive city development in Southeast Asia noted that 245 million people in Southeast Asia are at risk of vulnerability from urbanisation and suffer income disparity. A lack of public housing leads to slum areas and informal settlements which are often high risk areas that have a lack of access to basic services; resulting in a reduced quality of life. Whereas rural poor have natural safety nets such as access to natural resources, the ability to grow and catch food, and the proximity of family and friends; urban poor do not have these benefits and spend more money on their basic survival.

### **Southeast Asia's Unique Relationship with the Coasts**

Southeast Asia has a coastline of 173,000 km and 80 percent of the region's population live within 100 km of them. A 2008 report on Population and Economic Growth indicated that 1000 people migrate from rural areas to urban coastal centres in

Vietnam and the Philippines daily in search of jobs. With increasing internal migration from rural areas to coastal cities, urban poor populations escalate; increasing the demand for freshwater and adding to existing sewage issues. Coastal and island areas, not yet affected by an influx of citizens on the hunt for jobs, are often taken over by developers for high-end luxury housing and resort development, displacing local communities and destroying natural habitats.

The irony in this is that Southeast Asia is home to some of the most important tropical habitats in the world, hosting 80 percent of the world's biodiversity. Studies have shown that some regions in Southeast Asia form the natural habitat for 40 percent of all terrestrial and marine species on earth, with Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines declared as mega biodiversity regions. These rich habitats and their residents are often key attractions in regional tourism yet they stand to be damaged or lost to burgeoning coastal populations and reckless development.



*Traditional fisherman, Shahril, hauling up an empty net in coastal waters. In the background is a sand dredging ship set against a coast that has been completely industrialised.  
Photo credit: Serina Rahman*

## The Way Forward

While Southeast Asia has made some headway in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction, it is clear that the region is yet to engage in true sustainable development. In order to ensure that regional agreements and policies do not remain simply ink on paper, effort needs to be taken to actively engage with rural and urban poor to ensure that they benefit from the agreements signed at the top. Governments need to acknowledge the work of civil society organisations and include community representatives in decision-making and policy inputs to ensure that laws put into place are relevant to actual conditions on the

ground. An understanding of and respect for indigenous knowledge and its ability to ensure sustainable livelihoods need to be tapped so that developments minimise their impacts on both local communities and natural habitats.

If the region is able to ensure that sustainable inclusive development is of primary importance above mere economic growth, there is a fighting chance that the region's economy as a whole can meet the lofty goals set. However, if local communities, marginalised groups and the environment continue to be side-lined and disregarded, economic growth stands to be a hollow statistic and the wider citizenry shall continue to suffer.



*Coastal reclamation for development leads to algal overgrowth on seagrass meadows.  
Photo credit: Serina Rahman*

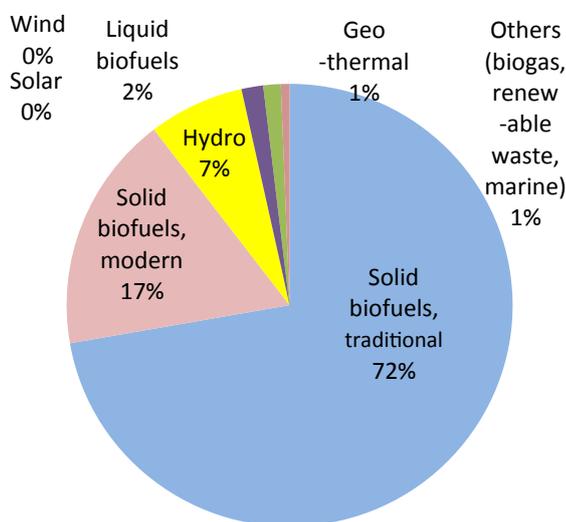
# NTS SNAPSHOT: ENERGY ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Southeast Asia produced 778 million tonnes of oil equivalent (MTOE) of energy in 2013, and consumed 606 MTOE. <sup>1</sup> Looking towards the future, ASEAN is expected to require more than 2.7 times its current energy to meet targeted economic growth. <sup>2</sup>

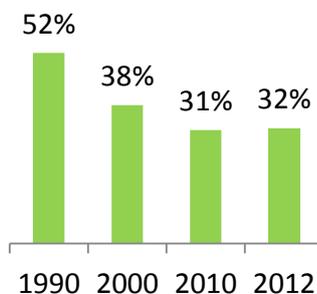
## ENERGY IN ASIA PACIFIC DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (AMONG ADB MEMBERS) <sup>3</sup>

	PERFORMANCE	2030 SDG TARGET
ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY	89% (492 MILLION HAVE NO ACCESS)	100% (EVERYONE HAS ACCESS)
USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY	24%	48%

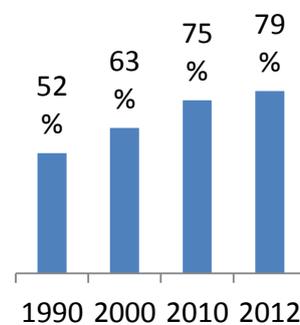
### Components of ASEAN's Renewable Energy in 2012 <sup>4</sup>



### Non-renewable energy continues to dominate energy consumption in ASEAN ASEAN Share of Renewable Energy Consumption <sup>4</sup>



### More have access to electricity ASEAN Access to Electricity (% of Population) <sup>4</sup>



"Renewable energy is a potential area for greater energy security. High capital costs, unreliability, and grid connection challenges however are often cited as the reasons for relatively slow progress in renewable energy development."<sup>5</sup>

## Potential Start Dates for Nuclear Power Plant Operations in Southeast Asia

Note: There are currently no running nuclear power plants (NPPs) in Southeast Asia.

2023                      2024                      2025                      2026                      2027

Vietnam <sup>6</sup>  
(contracts signed)

Indonesia <sup>6</sup> (well-developed plans, commitment pending)

### No Dates Yet

#### NOT POLICY OPTION AT PRESENT

Cambodia <sup>8</sup>  
Singapore <sup>9</sup>  
Myanmar <sup>8</sup>  
Brunei <sup>7</sup>

#### DISCUSSION AS POLICY OPTION

Philippines <sup>8</sup>

#### DEVELOPING PLANS

Laos <sup>8</sup>  
Malaysia <sup>8</sup>

#### WELL-DEVELOPED PLANS BUT COMMITMENT PENDING

Thailand <sup>8</sup>

### Notes and sources:

- 1) South-East Asia Energy Data 2014, Enerdata Consulting, 2014.
- 2) The 4th energy outlook, The ASEAN Centre for Energy, 2015.
- 3) Sustainable energy for all – Tracking progress in Asia and the Pacific: A summary report, Asian Development Bank, 2015.
- 4) Sustainable energy for all 2015 – Progress toward sustainable energy, International Energy Agency (IEA) and the World Bank, 2015.
- 5) NTS Bulletin, November 2015.
- 6) Based on presentations in "Is Southeast Asia Ready for Nuclear Power?", RSIS Panel at Singapore International Energy Week, 29 October 2015.
- 7) IAEA ready to help Brunei with nuclear power, Brunei Times, 30 Jan 2015.
- 8) Emerging Nuclear Energy Countries, World Nuclear Association, 2015.
- 9) Fact Sheet on Nuclear Energy Pre-Feasibility Study, 2012, Ministry of Trade and Industry.

# Positions of Responsibility: People-Centred Approaches to Humanitarian Action

By Alistair D. B. Cook

As 2015 draws to a close, we find ourselves within arm's reach of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on 23 and 24 May 2016. UN Secretary – General Ban Ki-moon initiated the process in 2014 to bring together governments, humanitarian organisations, people affected by humanitarian crises and new partners including the private sector to propose reforms and new approaches to global humanitarianism that will put the system in good stead for the future. Since the summit process began, eight regional consultations took place as well as global consultations on thematic issues. In April this year, Singapore hosted the Global Forum on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination at Changi Command and Control Centre, Changi Naval Base.

This Global Forum focused on two World Humanitarian Summit themes where civil-military coordination has a role to play; humanitarian effectiveness and serving the needs of people in conflict. The meeting generated discussions and formulated

recommendations on how to set an innovative and forward-looking agenda for humanitarian action. Several observations on how to improve the global humanitarian system were also formulated. As the summit process progressed, many of these themes were covered in different parts of the world as an essential part of reforming the system and ensuring greater accountability.

## Building Sustainable Communications

One of the core challenges the current humanitarian system faces is that civilian agencies and military are not engaged with each other early enough in operational planning and preparedness activities. Sometimes this is as a result of mandate and at other times through lack of exposure to one another. Civilian agencies and militaries essentially operate independently at present and work in an ad hoc manner in the aftermath of disaster. There is a need for civilian agencies and militaries to work together in the disaster preparation phase to



*Earthquake in Nepal. A woman from Singla village extracts her belongings from the rubble. Photo credit: Asian Development Bank*

help bridge communication gaps and foster an understanding of what each organisation does and how they operate. There is also a need to standardise operations in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Another area of cooperation for civilian agencies and militaries would be to build a common platform to prepare and respond to disasters. Conflicting reports often emerge from the field, and there is a real need to share information between organisations so that those in the most need are given the necessary assistance. In the aftermath of a disaster like in Nepal earlier this year, it is not always clear what the local capacity is or what national assets are available; information that can help tailor the responses by those from outside the country. If each organisation were to approach a national government for this information, that government would quickly become overwhelmed by the offers of help. It is therefore important to establish a common framework that international partners can use to access accurate information and that the local government can tap on to clarify the exact humanitarian assistance needed.

If we are to ensure a more effective response, stronger lines of communication to identify key focal points from civilian government agencies to militaries, private sector and international and national humanitarian actors need to be facilitated. These relationships take significant time to cultivate and are often ad hoc and dependent on the personal interaction between two or more individuals. There is therefore a need to move towards an institutional relationship that ensures communication channels remain open regardless of the personality in any position. It is also necessary that this structure exists beyond the aftermath of a manmade or natural disaster, and that sustainable communication channels are established and continue during peacetime. However, these relationships should not be solely focused on civilian and military interactions. One of the key aims of the

World Humanitarian Summit is to recognise the roles of multiple stakeholders beyond the traditional actors – particularly the role of local communities, the private sector, media and technology.



*The Nepalese Army and US Air Force airmen worked with members of the Bangladesh Air Force and the Indian Air Force to process disaster relief cargo from US aircraft after the disaster in Nepal. Photo credit: U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa White/Released*

## Local Communities

In the aftermath of a disaster, the first responders will be those closest to you such as friends or family. Strong communities support these networks and provide part of the immediate response, through community centres and places of worship. It is important that community activities are sustainable and supported as part of a holistic policy for disaster management. Yet this recognition must also come with the realisation that when violence erupts as we have seen in Myanmar against the Muslim minority or when natural disasters occur, communities cannot be left as sole responders. This was the unfortunate situation earlier this year in the floods that affected parts of Myanmar.

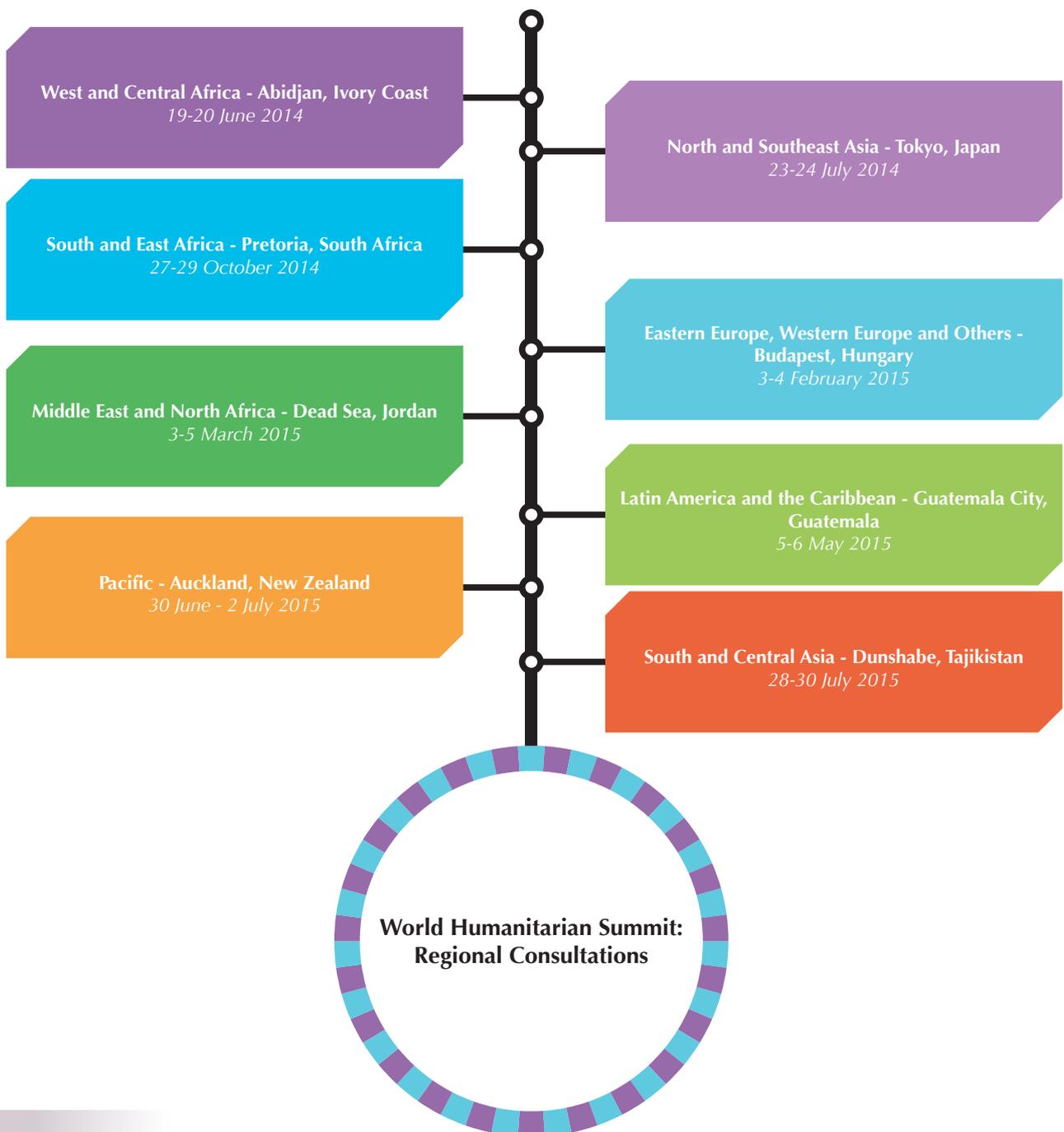
The Asia–Pacific is home to 40 per cent of the world’s natural disasters. In this region, there is a significant military presence in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster because of the military’s ability to respond quickly. However, the overall coordination function falls under the remit of civilian national disaster management

offices across the region. These offices currently vary considerably in terms of capacity, so it is essential that these national institutions have a stronger focus to ensure they are fully functional and engage with sub-national government offices and local communities so that they are involved in the planning stages, given that they are the most in tune to the needs of the local population. In times of crisis, militaries are often well placed to respond quickly; within the crucial 72 hour period after a disaster strikes. It is therefore critical that relations between civilian agencies and the military are well developed in advance. With a large

number of agencies involved in disaster preparedness and response it is essential to have a well-developed plan drawing on the strengths of those involved to minimise overlap and duplication of work.

### Private Sector

Through the summit process, the role of the private sector was identified as an underused resource. While military involvement in natural disaster response in the Asia-Pacific was identified for its surge capacity, the use of private aeroplanes to transport aid supplies was a cheaper alternative compared



to military aircraft. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are key stakeholders in disaster management and their involvement should go beyond corporate social responsibility and be integrated as part of their core business strategy. If small and medium-sized enterprises are on board early in the disaster relief planning stage and are aware of the potential effects of a natural or manmade disaster, they will be able to develop business continuity plans. That said, corporate social responsibility does play an important role in disaster response.

In recent years organisations like the Corporate Citizen Foundation have brought together a group of private sector companies that developed a response capability that enabled them to act within 72 hours of a disaster. The CCF assembled a team that includes local businesses and embeds the media as part of the response team to accurately communicate the plight of those affected to the international community.

## Media and Technology

While the media plays an important function in reporting on disaster situations, the role of social media and technology

has become ever more important as more people gain internet access. The emergence of the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan is an example of the role that social media now plays in disaster response. As affected communities posted photographs online, HOT was able to collate this information and display it on pre-existing satellite imagery to identify areas of need. At the same time, however, there are still many communities that do not have internet access and must still be manually accounted for in needs assessments.

The role and importance of a people-centred approach to humanitarian action needs to reflect the added value that different stakeholders play. Through the summit process, a people-centred approach has been discussed in detail, but at times this has been a diversion of the burden of response away from those who have the means to communities who are in greatest need. For us to avoid this and to ensure a sustainable approach to disasters, it is essential that we identify responsibilities of each stakeholder and generate a stronger network of accountability on those who can make a real contribution.



*Istanbul – where Europe meets Asia – will host the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Many will watch to see if sustainable humanitarian reforms are possible.  
Photo credit: Moyan Brenn*

# Southeast Asian Food Security: Muddy Waters or Clear Skies?

By Paul Teng

During the past year, food security has generally improved across the globe, irrespective of which index is used to assess it. In July 2015, the FAO Food Price Index hit its lowest level in almost six years, when prices for major food commodities reached their lowest average monthly level since September 2009 due to sharp drops in the prices of dairy products and vegetable oils, although there were some price increases in sugar and cereals and meat prices have remained relatively unchanged.

The Economist Intelligence Unit/Dupont released its Global Food Security Index (GFSI) in mid-2015 and rated countries using a number of indicators reflecting affordability, availability and quality and safety. The GFSI showed that food security improved in almost all regions across the globe except Europe. Low-income and lower-middle-income countries around the

world have led the way, narrowing the gap between the most food-secure and least food-secure countries. From Southeast Asia, Singapore was the second most food secure country in the world, followed by Malaysia (at rank 34), Thailand (52), Vietnam (65), Philippines (72), Indonesia (74), Myanmar (78), and Cambodia (98).

A third index called the Rice Bowl Index (RBI) sponsored by Syngenta and the Frontier Strategy Group, and developed collaboratively with RSIS NTS Centre, showed that over the twelve months preceding July 2015, the food security robustness of the 15 Asian countries covered by the RBI continued to improve – albeit less significantly compared to 2014 and slightly below the 10 year average improvement. Most ASEAN countries have improved on their ‘food security robustness’ with the exception of Thailand.



*Labour-intensive rice farming. Photo credit: [www.posibl.com](http://www.posibl.com)*

## Why the Improvement?

Strong economic fundamentals have driven GDP growth in emerging markets in the Asia-Pacific, where GFSI scores improved in 73% of the countries rated. Some of the drivers have been suggested to be the relatively high saving and investment rates, rapid workforce growth, an expanding middle class and a shift from low-productivity agriculture to high-productivity manufacturing. A promising result is that the gap between the Asia-Pacific and the most food secure North American region is shrinking.

With the RBI, the fall in inflation in the fifteen Asian countries has been suggested as a key factor for the improvement in food security robustness generally; a country like Pakistan saw improvement in the RBI robustness of 8.8% over the previous year. Pakistan also improved considerably within farm level factors as a result of falling labor costs and improvements in the percentage of rural population with access to water. The fall in Thailand's RBI score on the other hand was driven by an increase in its Unit Labor Cost which contributed to a 1.7% decline in the country's RBI score. Overall, the RBI points to reduced volatility in production and lower commodity prices across Asia. However, the latter could also lead to reduced investment by farmers in technology, a necessity for Asian farmers to improve farm productivity.



## Danger of Complacency

The encouraging progress this past year notwithstanding, global food insecurity remains a challenge. The GFSI warns that, going forward, increased volatility of agricultural production caused by factors such as severe and “out-of-sync” weather events, are constraints on making progress towards food security worldwide.

Likewise, the RBI also asks, in its complementing issue of 2015, whether the current situation indicates a “new norm” or a “false dawn”? Is it time for ASEAN or Asia to take a respite from all the concerns, or should this be an opportunity to make more permanent a desirable state of food security? According to the FAO State of Food Insecurity Report 2014, of all the world's regions, Southeast Asia has made the greatest reduction in its number of undernourished people in the last few decades, but today, one out of ten in ASEAN are still hungry! And this is in a region which has seen spectacular economic growth and has one of the richest countries in the world. Furthermore, the Gini coefficient in most ASEAN countries has also increased, indicating an increasing gap between the richest and the poor.



Street food cooked and sold by local entrepreneurs. Photo credit: Serina Rahman



## Gazing into Muddy Waters

The food security landscape cannot be considered in isolation from the wider macro-economic environment. A potential slowdown in economic growth will affect disposable income levels and so affect consumer spending and food consumption patterns. Faced with lower incomes, poorer consumers will have to allocate a larger portion of their disposable income to food purchases, increasing vulnerability to price movements. However commodity prices are expected to remain low and thus partially help redress the anticipated slowdown in regional economies by making food more affordable. But, as noted earlier, farmers are consumers as well as producers, and falling commodity prices reduce farmer incomes and hence the potential to invest in their farms. Reduced productivity can reduce farm incomes and this affects a group that in many cases, may be the most food insecure, i.e. those living in rural communities.

So back to the question posed by the RBI -- are we facing a new norm of slower economic growth and lower commodity prices, reducing food prices but equally affecting the incomes of many of those who

are food insecure? Or is it a false dawn and do we expect food prices to rise, economies to strengthen and countries to struggle to make substantial improvements in their overall level of food security robustness?

Currently, many ASEAN governments are making structural reforms in anticipation of the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the end of 2015. The AEC will have differential effects on ASEAN economies, proving a boon for some and a bane for others. However, for the mid to longer term, the steady growth in household incomes across ASEAN will move more people into the middle and affluent classes and propel consumption growth. The middle classes will demand a more diverse food basket of better quality, which will present opportunities in production for those farmers that have the capacity to change cropping patterns and/or invest in technologies that deliver more sustainable yield and better quality. The middle class is also more able to bear food price shocks than the poor as less disposable income is commonly committed to the purchase of food.

The RBI has also suggested that this will have flow-through consequences for food

security in the region as with more stable demand for better quality food, farmers may have the confidence to invest more in technology and knowledge building in order to improve the sustainability and reliability of their production. All of this suggests a reasonably positive outlook for the region and continued modest improvements in overall food security robustness.

## Emergent Trends of the Near Future

A paradox exists in that the most food secure (richer) nations are often the ones with deficient food production capacity while the food insecure poorer countries have the most abundant agricultural resources but are also the most vulnerable to price shocks. Singapore, for example, in the GFSI emerged as the most food secure country in Asia despite importing over 90% of its food from over a hundred countries. This situation underscores the points that food trade can be an effective means of achieving food security and secondly that domestic food production with a goal of self-sufficiency does not necessarily equate to food security. A third consideration is that it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security under conditions with no major disruptions to food stocks and their distribution.

Emergents that could impact the future of food security in the region include:

- **Management of the impacts of climate change** – adaptation measures and supportive policies which deal with the near-term symptoms of climate change such as increased frequency of unexpected severe weather and disruptions of normal weather cycles like monsoon onset;
- **Adopting new business models for farming** – developing models that increase productivity, incentivise farmers and allow for the use of modern technologies; all of which move farmers/producers away from subsistence mode to an enterprise mode able to achieve livelihood means and generate surpluses;

- **Improving supply chains** – inclusiveness of smallholders and sustainability of supply chain components; recognizing that ASEAN and Asia are home to most of the world's smallholders and there is great opportunity to integrate them into modern food supply chains which may be meta-national;
- **Investing in innovative technology and infrastructure** – the position of biotechnology crops and new ICT tools to empower farmer decision making; the growth of Genetically Modified (GM) and non-GM biotech crops will increase with the needs of the region to be more productive, efficient and competitive in agriculture, and the penetration of modern ICT to farmers will move beyond just mundane communication to farming knowledge and marketing communication;
- **Creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment** – for trade facilitation intra-ASEAN and in conformity with international standards as ASEAN moves towards an integrated market and trade bloc; increasingly the demands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) will come to influence all producers as consumers within Asia and in export markets demand higher standards of quality and safety in their food; and
- **Fallout (positive or negative) from the phased implementation of the AEC** may be part of the set of unknowns that policy makers will have to contend with in the coming months.

Overall, these emergents illustrate the increasingly complex landscape within which food production and its supply chains operate, and where it is imperative for individual countries to be prepared for perturbations and for the region to have the capacity for collaborative action when needs arise.

## An Overview of Non-Traditional Security

By Vishalini Sagar

The study of non-traditional security (NTS) emerged during the post-Cold War era due to significant shifts in the global security paradigm. As risks of traditional interstate wars and conflicts decline, new security challenges, which are typically non-military in nature, have transpired from transnational threats. Individuals, communities and societies in general are threatened by a plethora of factors that are often more significant than traditional military security. Studies have shown that NTS crises have resulted in more deaths and had a substantially larger impact on people over time than conventional military threats. Oftentimes, overcoming these NTS crises are more challenging than preventing traditional military threats.

Conflicts and instability are increasingly plaguing Southeast Asia through natural disasters, failures in governance, insurgency and health crises. Many governments in the region are not sufficiently prepared to

respond effectively due to the scale and complexity of NTS crises. As a result, when such crises occur, the devastation surpasses territorial boundaries and the consequences have ripple effects throughout the region. For example, the forced migration of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar; the flooding of the Mekong river; Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) pandemics; recurring transnational haze from land clearing and 'slash and burn' agricultural practices in Indonesia; and transnational terrorist threats have exacted high costs in terms of human security, lost tourism and business, and hampered economic development.

The traditional security paradigm focuses on the protection of nations, the ability of states to defend themselves from external threats, the concept of sovereignty and the importance of military prowess. Their assessment and analysis of security



*Flood damage in West Malaysia. Photo credit: Chiam Shin Shing.*



*High waters in Kelantan, Malaysia. Photo credit: Chiam Shin Shing.*

challenges conceptualise international security stringently, in terms of breaching national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Threats are understood primarily in relation to the military capabilities of other states and the main goals of security are to defend states from foreign attacks. This approach is insufficient to address other emerging NTS threats.

NTS challenges are largely centered on human security related issues. These are emerging challenges that threaten the survival and well being of individuals and states, and can be broadly categorized into these key focus areas - economic security threats such as poverty and unemployment; food security threats arising from lack of access to basic food, health security threats caused by new

and recurrent epidemics, environmental security threats through natural disaster and climate changes; personal security threats such as ethnic tension and political repression. Conceptualizing these discourses under traditional security dogmas that focus mainly on the state's role and influence is no longer a panacea for these human security issues. In order to sufficiently encapsulate, understand and resolve these threats, solutions need to be people-centric, multilateral and holistic.

In 1999, scholars across Asia came together to examine non-traditional security challenges in the post-Cold War and post-Asian Financial Crisis regional environment and conceived the NTS studies niche area. While traditional security models tend to be state-centric, non-traditional security issues are multi-faceted and multi-layered, and often intertwined. For example, human security issues connected with deforestation in Indonesia includes all of the following; loss of forest cover (affects watersheds), reduction in biodiversity (affects food security), large scale release of greenhouse gases from forest fires (exacerbates climate change issue), industrial pollution (poor air quality affecting local communities), haze spreading to neighbouring countries



*Typhoon aftermath. Photo credit: Chiam Shin Shing*

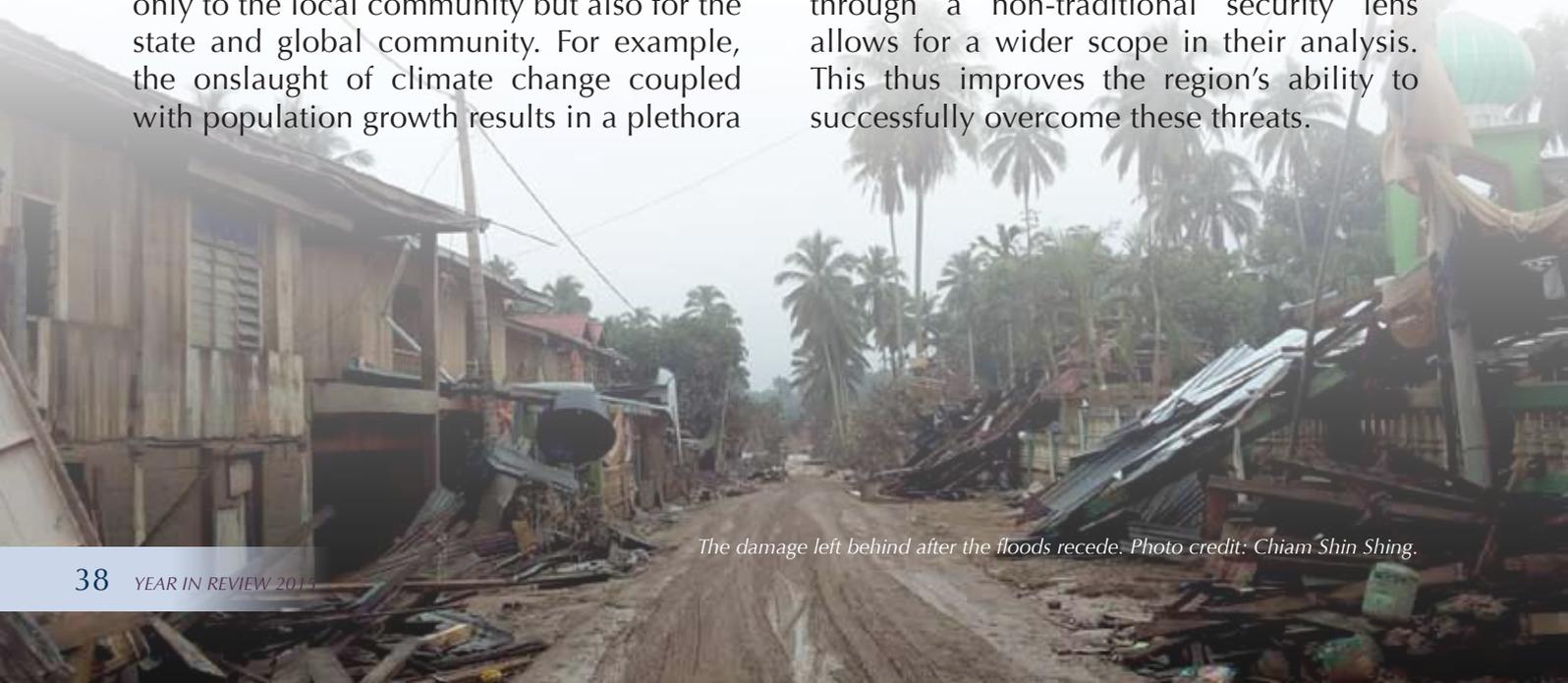
(affecting countries' income from tourism), malaria and other communicable diseases (spread as a result of mosquitoes breeding in stagnant water post-logging) and corruption concerns (much of deforestation is illegal). Thus addressing one issue will have a positive impact on other human security issues. The analysis of emerging trends and developments in areas such as regional cooperation, environmental problems, globalisation and governance have a critical impact on the current and future security landscape. Discussions on NTS and transnational challenges, critiques of the process of securitisation and de-securitisation of issues will provide decision makers with a better understanding of NTS issues, enabling them to formulate effective policies to overcome these threats.

NTS challenges are transnational in nature, in that they are neither a purely domestic or purely interstate issue but that they can cross national boundaries to pose dangers to an entire region. These security issues can emerge suddenly or at very short notice and can spread quickly due to advancements in communications technology, globalization and myriad other triggers. In an increasingly interconnected world made smaller through increased trade and international travel, new infectious diseases such as MERS and the H1N1 Flu Virus are more easily transmitted, and can quickly turn into a global epidemic. Anthropogenic disturbances to nature and the environment result in security threats not only to the local community but also for the state and global community. For example, the onslaught of climate change coupled with population growth results in a plethora

of other non-traditional security challenges such as food security threats increasing risk of hunger, forced migration of people as a result of reduced local habitability, and possible internal or external conflicts due to competition for scarce resources. These complex humanitarian crises cannot be entirely eliminated at this stage but risk can be mitigated through the implementation of adequate preparedness, management and rebuilding mechanisms. Human security issues overcome borders, and thus require transnational solutions.

NTS threats have recently emerged front and centre for many decision makers and governments. There is an increasing understanding that potential security threats can now stem from within the state or non-state actors, unlike in the past when a state's main source of threats was from other states. In today's world, security, international legitimacy and sovereignty, rest not only on protecting a state's territory from military offensives but on the state's responsibility to protect its citizens' basic rights. The inability to do so results in states losing international standing and credibility. States are also aware that complex humanitarian crises cannot be solved alone, and require significant cooperation between governments to formulate policies at a regional and international level to overcome NTS challenges.

Viewing emerging security challenges through a non-traditional security lens allows for a wider scope in their analysis. This thus improves the region's ability to successfully overcome these threats.



*The damage left behind after the floods recede. Photo credit: Chiam Shin Shing.*

# NTS and ASEAN's Community Pillars

By Margareth Sembiring and Vincent Mack Zhi Wei

Southeast Asia faces a slew of non-traditional security issues, ranging from environmental challenges such as deforestation and air pollution due to the haze, to transnational crimes such as drug and human trafficking. UNODC reports in 2014 that a third of all trafficked victims are children at risk of sexual exploitation. Furthermore, Southeast Asia is also a conflict and disaster prone-zone, host to a quarter of the world's conflicts and around half of the world's natural disasters last year. Through the platform of ASEAN, countries in the region have worked together in an attempt to address these issues. Measures and mechanisms have been put in place through the three ASEAN Community pillars namely the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).



## The APSC – Combatting Transnational Crime and Disasters within ASEAN's Borders

Although the APSC community was created to respond to NTS issues, its emphasis is limited to transnational crimes and other transboundary challenges such as illicit drug trafficking, human trafficking, piracy, arms smuggling, money laundering, terrorism, international economic crime, and cyber-crime. Various legal agreements – such as the Work Programme to Implement the Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime, the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters among ASEAN Member States, and the ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking

in Persons Particularly Women and Children – have been signed by all member states to address these issues.

The APSC also looks at cooperation on disaster management and emergency response, particularly civil-military coordination; the interface between ASEAN and ASEAN-related bodies such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Plus Three, and the East Asia Summit (EAS); joint response at political and operational levels, and the SOP for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations (SASOP).

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is the main regional policy framework and common platform for disaster response in the region, with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) as its driver and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) as its operational body. In addition to SASOP, the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Teams (ASEAN-ERAT), the Disaster Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA), and a Technical Working Group on Civil Military Coordination were established to facilitate joint responses. More recently, the 2013 ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Enhancing Cooperation in Disaster Management urged synergy and coordination among the different sectors within ASEAN to yield better disaster management responses in multiple aspects including health, defence, political and security, and social welfare.

Joint efforts to improve capacity and capability to respond to disaster situations have been commendable. In the period between 2011 and 2013, ASEAN almost garnered the “substantial achievements attained but with recognized limitations in capacities in resources” level of progress under the Hyogo Framework of Action indicators. As the score suggests, despite the achievements, limited

resources and the scale of disasters may necessitate additional assistance from external parties.

While the APSC emphasises joint responses, other aspects of disaster management such as risk reduction, building community resilience, capacity building and information sharing are addressed in the ASCC pillar.

The APSC takes a comprehensive approach in managing conflict and peacebuilding in the region, focusing on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building. Conflict prevention measures place emphasis on organising bilateral and multilateral exchanges between military and defence officials of ASEAN member states, sharing information, building norms of cooperation, and increasing transparency of defence policies. On conflict resolution, ASEAN seeks rational and non-violent dispute settlements and promotes the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) – a signed agreement of mutual respect, co-operation, non-interference and a commitment to peaceful relations. Much of the APSC's efforts involve research into existing regional mechanisms of dispute settlement and the promotion of a regional cooperation network for knowledge transfer and best practices with ASEAN member states, the UN and other organizations. The APSC's approach towards post-conflict peace building combines strengthening its regional capacity in providing humanitarian assistance, capacity development in post-conflict reconstruction efforts and further increasing reconciliation efforts through promoting research and public awareness programmes.

### **The AEC – Food, Energy and Trade**

The Food, Agriculture and Forestry elements of the AEC emphasises trade and competitiveness of ASEAN's food, agriculture and forestry products, therefore contributing to the food safety aspect of food security. Similarly, the ASEAN Energy Cooperation which includes the ASEAN Power Grid and the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline covers mainly the energy supply aspect of energy security. In this light, more comprehensive frameworks to complement

these efforts need to be established to address food and energy security issues more holistically, as sustainable development goals cannot be achieved if economies are not sufficiently transformed.

### **The ASCC – Strengthening the Soul of ASEAN**

Compared to the previous two pillars, the ASCC pillar focuses on human security-related aspects of NTS issues. This human-centric approach is built upon human development, social welfare and protection, social justice and rights, environmental sustainability and the ASEAN identity characteristics. This addresses a dimension in NTS studies often omitted when we only consider the political economic aspects of security. In addition to disaster management, the ASCC pillar deals with environment and sustainable development, health, gender issues and migrant workers.

The spirit of sustainable development is embedded in a number of regional environmental activities. ASEAN countries are committed to addressing global environmental issues, notably the ones relating to the ozone layer and toxic and hazardous wastes. They also cooperate in managing and preventing transboundary environmental pollution including transboundary haze problems. Promoting environmental education and public participation; encouraging the use of Environmentally Sound Technology (EST); initiating ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable City awards; harmonising environmental policies and databases; protecting and conserving coastal and marine environments, natural resources and biodiversity, as well as freshwater resources; and adapting to climate change, are part of the efforts taken to achieve sustainable development and a clean and green environment.

Health security issues are examined under Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) within the wider disaster management framework of the ASCC. The first Southeast Asia Regional Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Preparedness and Response Table Top Exercise was conducted in 2010, and the ASEAN

Working Group on Pandemic Preparedness and Response's Work Plan was revised in 2012. While charting mechanisms for multi-sectoral PPR is undoubtedly critical, there is a greater need to ensure that healthcare infrastructure and services are functional and of a high quality. After all, without adequate hospital beds and skilful healthcare providers, joint responses can only go so far. These are the aspects that Southeast Asian countries need to address collectively.

The ASCC also works on addressing the issues of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), maternal and child health, tobacco control, and mental health. ASEAN has developed regional strategies and corresponding work plans on NCDs and curbing tobacco consumption. The implementation of the tobacco control work plan is carried out by the ASEAN Focal Points on Tobacco Control (AFPTC).

On the issue of gender, the rights and welfare of women are addressed within the same category as children's, the elderly, and that of persons with disabilities. The parameters used to measure women's rights include enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education; wage employment in the non-agricultural sectors, the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament; and the gender inequality index (GII). UNDP statistical data shows that in 2013 the average GII across Southeast Asian countries stood at 0.373 of 1. This is in contrast to the average of 0.158 for countries classified by UNDP as having very high human development – amongst which are Norway, Australia, the USA and the Netherlands. As a lower number indicates greater gender equality, the 2012 GII figure shows that ASEAN countries need to do more to close the gender gap.

ASEAN also looks at strengthening entrepreneurship skills for women. The ASEAN Women Entrepreneurship Network (AWEN) launched in 2014 is an effort to bolster the presence of women entrepreneurs and improve their access to markets in the region.

To further ensure protection for women, all ASEAN Member States have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms

of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Although national legislations, policies and programmes on social protection for women are available in all member states, a lack of implementation of these legal instruments and existing societal norms that tend to discriminate against women may hinder the overall objectives of achieving gender parity.

The ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers reflects member states' awareness and willingness to address issues pertaining to migrant workers. However, the fact that member states were not able to meet the targeted timeline of finalisation of the draft ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers by the end of 2014 shows that migrant worker issues remain contentious. Although relevant policies, legislations and mechanisms exist in all countries in the region, legal cases involving migrant workers and employees and the work conditions of migrant workers remain a valid concern that ASEAN still needs to address collectively.

## What Next?

While ASEAN countries have incorporated NTS issues in the ASEAN Community blueprints, programmes and activities, the future direction for NTS governance in Southeast Asia needs to place greater emphasis on its people. Getting the frameworks, policies and mechanisms right is the first step, but this needs to be followed up by human-oriented agenda and initiatives. On the issues of migrant workers, for example, more attention needs to be given to work conditions and the efficiency in providing legal assistance to troubled migrant workers. On gender issues, ASEAN needs to focus more on practical approaches aimed at changing society's mind-set and behaviours towards women. On energy security, questions of energy accessibility and affordability need to be addressed collectively. To this end, regional cooperation should not only be confined to governmental institutions. Instead, the scope of ASEAN's engagements with civil societies needs to be widened and strengthened as these organisations have unique insight into the realities on the ground and the myriad NTS challenges faced by the people.

## Evolving Health Issues in Southeast Asia

By Celina Yulo Loyzaga

Despite advances in medical technology and protocols on disease reporting, diseases are not bound by traditional physical boundaries. They are permanent companions of increasing global travel and trade, making the threat of spreading disease ever more present. With the move towards ASEAN integration, it is expected that with the increasing interconnectedness of economy, society and information systems, new vulnerabilities related to health and disease may emerge to affect state security.

In Southeast Asia, there has been a shift from infectious diseases (IDs) to chronic or non-communicable diseases (NCDs). When the region is faced with the spread of non-common IDs, state transparency and interstate communication remain vital to mitigate the proliferation of disease. Maintaining the health landscape beyond 2015 requires increased cooperation from governments and more robust measures for ID and NCD mitigation.

### Health Issues in Southeast Asia

In tandem with economic development and rapid urbanization, more Southeast Asians are entering the workforce. Therein lies the probability that an increased number of people will adopt a more sedentary lifestyle of desk-based work, fast food consumption, overeating, smoking and other high

risk health behaviours. These, in turn, predispose individuals towards developing NCDs, the most common of which include cardiovascular diseases (heart attacks or stroke), certain types of cancers, respiratory diseases (pulmonary diseases or asthma) and diabetes. These types of diseases, unlike IDs, are of slow progression and prolonged duration, placing long term pressure on Southeast Asian healthcare systems that were previously designed to address IDs. Dealing with increased NCD incidence is therefore likely to challenge Southeast Asian healthcare systems in future.

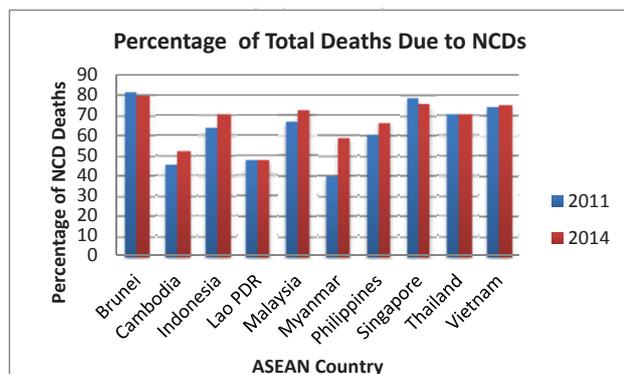
With an increased incidence rate comes increased health care expenditure in the region. However, the opening up of ASEAN and the standardization of healthcare services will have an implication on future systems. Hospital services in the region are predicted to attain similar capabilities and levels of development due to harmonization. However, in the event that local services cannot keep up with demand, the trend of wealthier Southeast Asians seeking more advanced healthcare in countries such as Singapore is likely to continue.

Senior health worker in Preah Vihar, Cambodia  
Photo credit: Chhor Sokunthea (World Bank/ Flickr)

Medical technology has kept pace with changing times and trends. In particular, health apps on smartphones have exploded onto the Southeast Asian market. These downloadable tools provide an avenue through which remote medical care is made possible while lessening costs, both in waiting and traveling times. Health apps such as *Doktor Gratis* in Indonesia provide free live consultation with a doctor. 'E-visits', a software solution designed by doctors provides for virtual hour-long consultations between patients and doctors. Patients pay their doctors online and can receive 'ePrescribe' which are printable prescriptions sent virtually. Doctors can also access patient records online, allowing for a review of information prior to the consultation.

## Future Prospects

A comparison of the percentage of deaths due to NCDs in 2011 and 2014 shows that 6 out of 10 ASEAN countries experienced an increase in percentage of deaths, while numbers for Lao PDR (48 percent) and Thailand (71 percent) remained the same. Singapore was the only country that curbed deaths from NCDs from 79 percent to 76 percent.



Adapted from WHO, 2014

Taking into account the data available, as a consequence of increased NCD deaths, it is expected that ASEAN healthcare systems will experience an increased demand for services. With regards to healthcare technology development, health apps, e-visits, and virtual doctor consultations have immediate advantageous consequences. For sick patients, travel times are cut, and scheduling is made more efficient. Home consultations lessen the risk of infecting or contaminating others in clinics or

hospitals. Had this technology and dissemination of relevant information been readily available today in one of the most connected cities in the world, South Korea, the rapid spread of MERS might have been avoided. Inasmuch as e-visits and the like can be a tool for those in possession of smartphones, technological innovation also runs the risk of further marginalizing those who are already off the grid. Not only will the poor be economically marginalized but they then stand to be technologically marginalized as well. Therefore, although health technology may be a solution for some, it will not be a solution for all.



Myriad health applications are now available on most smart phones.  
Photo Credit: International Free Press

Looking ahead, the healthcare industry in ASEAN must make shifts in order to cater to the demands of the time. As NCDs become more prevalent, hospitals need to be well equipped to address prolonged medical care. With regards to health technology, people who are able to use health apps and e-visits today are likely to utilize these tools more in future as they are the most efficient and inexpensive way of getting medical attention. Nevertheless, while health technology provides a platform to overcome some of tomorrow's challenges, it must be kept in mind that health technology is also divisive, in that those without access will continue to be healthcare-challenged.



Local hospital in Cambodia  
Photo credit: Chhor Sokunthea (World Bank/ Flickr)

## Examining MERS in South Korea

By Celina Yulo Lozada



Kim Woo Joo, Head of South Korea's MERS task force indicating the number of hospital related MERS Cases.

Photo Credit: Jeon Han

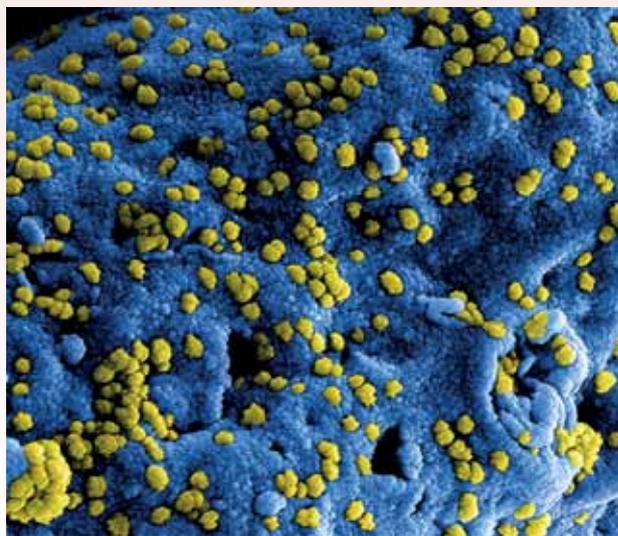
On May 20, 2015, the first Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) Coronavirus case in South Korea was confirmed. This was nine days after 'patient zero' gave samples to doctors. Seemingly concerned with keeping the status quo and maintaining public calm, the South Korean Government insisted that the virus did not spread across more than two meters and refused to name the hospitals where MERS patients were being cared for. In so doing, ill-informed South Koreans continued to seek medical treatment and visited patients in infected hospitals, and medical staff continued to treat patients without proper protection. As a result of this lack of information, the South Korean Government failed to contain the spread of the disease and contributed to the surge in the number of affected cases.

In order to effectively analyse an issue that falls within the category of non-traditional security, the investigation must examine both state and human aspects of the issue, as well as the dynamism between the two. In the context of MERS in South Korea, it is posited that the Korean government seemed more preoccupied with maintaining state security, and as a consequence, peoples' health security was jeopardized. Infected hospitals were not immediately named and information on how the disease was contracted was not made clear to the public. It is imperative that governments give equal significance to both

the state and peoples' security as both relate to and have implications on one another.

Little is known about the MERS virus, and the South Korean Government's refusal to acknowledge this during the spread of the virus proved to be fatal. MERS killed 36 people in South Korea, infected 182 and placed thousands in quarantine. This health security issue closed down schools and resulted in travel warnings that substantially affected tourism, costing the country millions in tourism revenue. The economic repercussions were still being felt months later, with South Korea still trying to revive tourism by allowing for visa-free travel for Chinese and Japanese tourists.

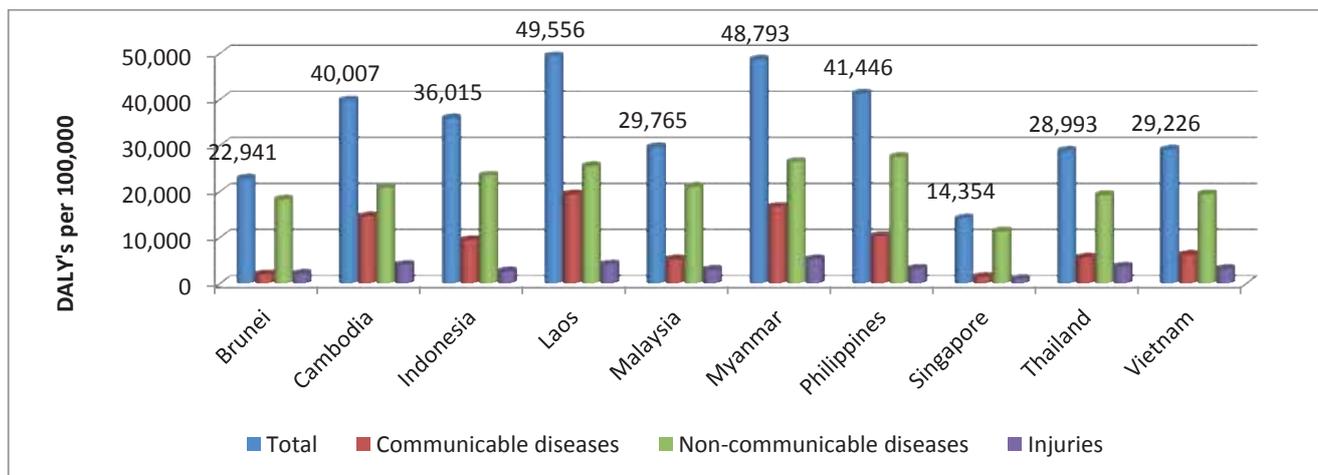
While some of the reasons given for the Korean government's inadequacy in handling MERS included Korean culture and a lack of funding for the Centre for Disease Control Prevention; it would not have taken much to provide the public with effective and relevant information. It is clear that equal consideration needs to be given to both the state and people's security in order to effectively handle a health security issue such as this.



The spread of MERS viruses on an infected cell.  
Photo Credit: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)

# NTS SNAPSHOT: HEALTH SECURITY

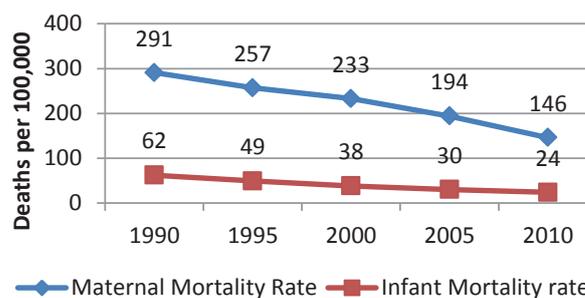
## Burden of Disease in Southeast Asia (in number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death per 100,000 populations, based on 2013 data)



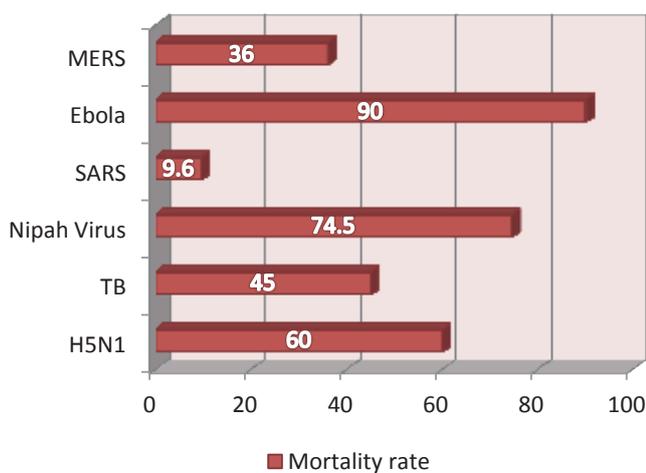
### HIV in Asia Pacific

- 4.8 million** • Total number of people living with HIV in Asia Pacific region (as of 2013)
- 350,000** • Estimated new HIV infections in Asia Pacific in 2013.
- 250,000** • Number of people who died of AIDS related causes in 2013.
- 33** • Percentage of HIV patients who were receiving antiretroviral treatment

### Maternal and Infant Mortality Rates in ASEAN



### Recent Pandemic Mortality Rates (as a % of total cases, as of 2014)



In 2013, the largest number of new TB cases occurred in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, accounting for 56% of all new cases globally.

### Epidemic & Pandemic Disasters (1980 – 2008)

No of events:	1,039
No of people killed:	183,278
Average people killed per year:	6,320
No of people affected:	19,411,394
Average people affected per year:	669,358

Sources: ASEAN, WHO, World Bank, Medicalopedia

## The Future of Nuclear Power in Asia and Europe

By Julius Cesar I. Trajano

Asia is now the world's primary region in the growth of nuclear power. In contrast, the use of nuclear energy in Europe is slowing down as many western nations now prefer renewable energy, which is viewed as a safer alternative to nuclear power, and natural gas which is currently cheaper due to the shale gas revolution. According to the World Nuclear Association, of a total of the US\$1.2 trillion that could be invested in new nuclear power projects worldwide by 2030, half will be made in Asia. In Europe, potential investments will amount to only US\$179 billion due to the scarcity of new nuclear projects. Currently, 123 out of 439 operable nuclear power reactors are operated by Asian countries; 41 of 69 nuclear reactors under construction in the world are in Asia, led by China, India and South Korea.

Concerns over nuclear safety, the need to reduce carbon emissions and enhancing energy security are among the underlying issues in state policies on nuclear power in both Asia and Europe. In Asia, China

and Japan are the most vocal supporters of nuclear power. On the other hand in Europe, Germany has the most aggressive policy against atomic energy.

### The Bleak Future of Nuclear Energy in Europe

The 131 nuclear power reactors in the European Union (EU) account for 28 percent of all the community's electricity production. Nuclear energy is the EU's second largest energy source for power generation, after coal. However, some member-states are now strongly anti-nuclear and depend more on other sources of energy such as alternative renewables in response to populist support for clean energy.

Phase-out policies have been actively implemented and pursued by several coalition governments; citing loopholes in nuclear safety standards as exemplified by the Fukushima accident. However, pro-nuclear groups argue that the phase-out policies



have not been based on environmental, economic or safety issues, but purely on political and ideological reasons.

Up to 2030, nuclear capacity that will be lost due to the decommissioning of a number of reactors is expected to outweigh the electricity generated from new reactors. Finland, France and Slovakia are the only EU member-states that have ongoing nuclear construction projects. Italy was forced to cancel its plan to revive its nuclear industry due to overwhelming public opposition while Spain will not add to its existing seven nuclear plants. Belgium is following in the footsteps of its neighbours. Even France, which has the highest number of nuclear reactors in the EU, has announced plans to significantly reduce its reliance on nuclear power.

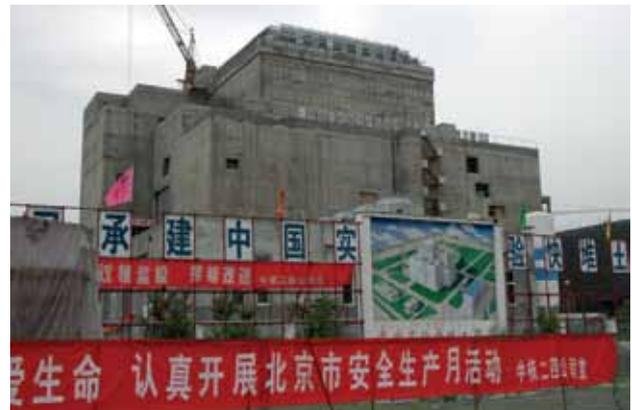
Germany is pursuing its long-held policy of phasing out all reactors by 2022 given widespread public support for the target to replace nuclear power with the multibillion Euro renewable energy programme and coal and gas-fired power plants. Renewables such as solar, wind, biomass and hydropower account for 27.8 percent of power consumption in 2014, higher than 6.2 percent in 2000. However, carbon emissions from brown coal, which destroys the environment more than any other type of coal, was down by only 2.2 percent. Hence, the country remains at risk of missing its medium-term emissions goal because of its increasing use of coal.



*The Sendai nuclear power plant in southwestern Japan was restarted in August 2015 after strict safety inspections.*  
Credit: IAEA Imagebank/flickr

## Nuclear Power is Booming in Asia

In Asia, China is moving ahead rapidly in building new nuclear power plants (NPPs), many of them on time and on budget. Of the 69 reactors currently under construction in Asia, 27 are in China, amounting to over a third of the nuclear power plants being built worldwide. In 2015, China also scrapped its moratorium on the approval of the construction of new Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) that it had put into place after the Fukushima incident. Eight new NPPs were scheduled to be launched in 2015. By 2020, China estimates that installed nuclear power capacity will reach 58 gigawatts, nearly a 300 percent increase from the current capacity of 20 gigawatts.



*China resumed the construction of new nuclear power plants in 2015.*

Credit: IAEA Imagebank/flickr

In June 2015, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang declared that China will promote nuclear power on a larger scale in domestic and international markets. Construction deals have already been inked with Pakistan, Romania, Argentina and South Africa while exclusive negotiations have been conducted with Turkey. China has also invested in the UK's Hinkley Point C, the first nuclear power project in the UK in two decades. However, the prospects of state-owned nuclear companies capturing more deals overseas largely depends on whether they can demonstrate their ability to bolster safety standards for their nuclear reactors at home. According to He Zuoxiu, a leading Chinese physicist and member of both the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese

Communist Party, China's rapid nuclear energy plans are "insane" as nuclear safety standards in the country remain inadequate. Stronger safety standards were allegedly rejected by the government to ensure that state-owned nuclear firms can easily resume operations as upgrading standards would require a lot more investment, affecting the competitiveness and profitability of these firms. One noticeable loophole is that the safety regulatory body, the National Nuclear Safety Administration, is under the China Atomic Energy Authority which is involved in the planning of new nuclear capacity. This contravenes global safety standards which state that the regulatory body should be fully independent from any agency that promotes nuclear energy.

Meanwhile, Japan restarted its first nuclear plant in Sendai in the country's southwest in August 2015. It was the first time Japan has generated nuclear power since the shutdown of its NPPs two years ago. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been determined to restart the NPPs as the country is importing a huge volume of coal, oil and natural gas, and the growing reliance on them has undermined Japan's efforts to reduce carbon emissions. The government wants nuclear power to account for as much as 22 per cent of Japan's energy needs by 2030.

Opinion polls show that most Japanese oppose the revival of nuclear power. Unlike the German government, the Japanese government is going against public opinion, claiming that keeping the country's 43 nuclear reactors offline would be too damaging economically and environmentally.

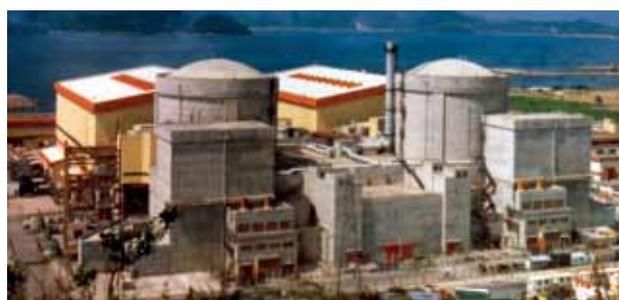
Another perspective on Japan's nuclear policy contends that it reflects the strong political connection and lobbying of the nuclear industry as it contributes to the campaign funds of political parties and politicians. Moreover, Japanese manufacturers are eager to sell their nuclear technology and expertise overseas and their success in getting lucrative deals will hugely depend

on Japan's ability to demonstrate that it can safely restart its NPPs at home.

Japan's National Regulation Authority claimed that the Sendai NPP was the first to meet strict new standards introduced after the Fukushima disaster and assured that stricter safety assessments meant that Fukushima-like accidents would not occur again. But according to anti-nuclear groups, some safety issues have been disregarded. Authorities have not yet devised a comprehensive evacuation plan for communities residing near the plants. In addition, the Sendai plant is located in a geologically vulnerable region which increases its risk from earthquakes and tsunami.

### Key Takeaways for Nuclear Newcomers

As the nuclear center of gravity is now quickly shifting towards Asia, it is indeed timely and crucial for aspiring nuclear users in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, to take valuable lessons from nuclear pioneers in Asia and Europe and consider the reasons why they either phase-out or expand nuclear power generation. Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia still need to legislate domestic laws for them to effectively implement and comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conventions on nuclear safety and emergency preparedness for nuclear accidents. In upholding a culture of nuclear safety in Southeast Asia, one important key is for ASEAN countries to examine the milestones that have been achieved by the pioneers of civilian nuclear energy in both Europe and Asia and the expensive mistakes that should now be avoided.



*China's Guangdong Nuclear Power Plant is expected to boost the country's electricity generation.  
Credit: IAEA Imagebank/flickr*

## Deep Geological Disposal: The Search for Nuclear Waste's Final Destination

By Julius Cesar I. Trajano

The failure of advanced nuclear powered nations to address the disposal of high-level nuclear waste (spent/used reactor fuel) from the day they start exploring nuclear energy should serve as a crucial reminder of the issues to overcome for newcomers in Southeast Asia. There is currently still no final repository site for high-level waste that has been accumulated globally for over six decades. High-level waste takes several thousand years to decay. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in France and Finland in developing deep geological disposal sites.

For many decades, France has relied on nuclear power and it is now under pressure to find a final disposal site for the radioactive waste produced. Since 1991, French scientists have been investigating whether high and moderately radioactive waste can be buried 500 meters underground. ANDRA, the French national agency for radioactive waste, is confident that its Cigeo geological disposal project can handle 10,000 cubic metres of high-level waste (HLW) and 100,000 cubic metres of intermediate-level waste buried in thick layers of a more consolidated sedimentary

rock, Argillite. This disposal site will operate for more than 100 years and be expanded as needed. Construction work will begin by 2020 and actual operations will commence by 2025. Andra aims to make the project a model for other nuclear-powered countries, providing it with business opportunities as it intends to offer its disposal technology and construction expertise overseas, if successful. South Korea is already interested in this technology and is now eyeing the French project for possible replication.

Finland has already started building Onkalo, a nuclear waste disposal project almost similar to France's. It will be expected to receive and bury nuclear waste from Finnish NPPs by 2020. It is also designed to take waste over a period of 100 years and store it for at least 100,000 years, safe from human activities, fire, flood and other risks. Despite these latest developments, it is still uncertain if all nuclear users, and even aspiring pro-nuclear power states, will be able to replicate and utilise the technology being developed in Europe. The success of any facility will depend on local support. Governments of these states must have transparent and informative public dialogue to overcome the challenge of siting disposal facilities. Another major challenge is that several nuclear users such as China and Japan are also vulnerable to natural disasters. For instance, Japan is considered too earthquake-prone and densely populated to try underground disposal, and a growing opposition to nuclear power has made it even more difficult than before to find a host site.



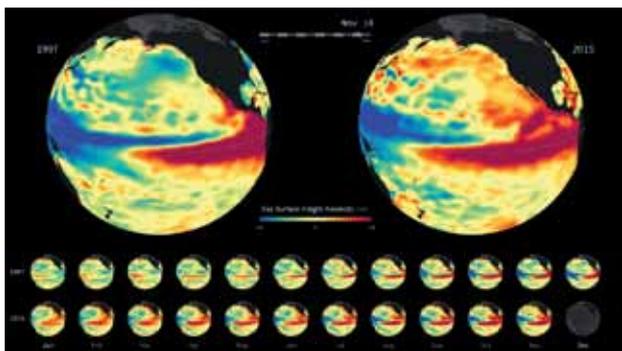
IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano (3-L) inspects Finland's Onkalo nuclear waste repository project.  
Photo credit: IAEA Imagebank/flickr

## In the Balance: Food Security in Southeast Asia

By Maxim Shrestha

Global and regional food security indices have been increasingly favourable of late. There is a slow but steady reduction in the total number of food insecure people around the world. In addition, the fact that the global food price index, as monitored by the FAO, has been falling steadily (now at 2006 levels and decreasing) is a boon since it means better access to food especially for lower income segments of society, which has also contributed to fewer people suffering from food insecurity.

One of the greatest challenges we face in Southeast Asia is whether we can build on this momentum to achieve “zero hunger” as stated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In the medium to long term, there are a number of immediate issues and developments that will play a major role in determining which way the region’s food security future over the next few years is likely to go.



Comparison of 1997 and 2015 El Niño events. The Pacific Ocean surface conditions suggest 2015 is shaping to be a much stronger event than 1997 and could correspondingly lead to more intense weather impacts like drought and irregular rainfall.

Photo credit: NASA/JPL OSTM/Jason-2 and Marit Jentoft-Nilsen: Visualizer

### Environmental Dimension: El Niño 2015

Tied to periodic warming and changes in flow of ocean currents in the Pacific, El Niño events alter temperatures and precipitation patterns as well as increase extreme weather conditions like droughts or abnormal rainfall. Southeast Asia is one of the most affected regions as a result of this meteorological phenomena.

El Niño events have been strongly correlated with dry spells and droughts in South and Southeast Asia. The 1997-98 El Niño, the strongest ever on record (based on available data since the 1950s) had an adverse impact on food production and the prices of foodstuff in the region. Estimates suggest that close to a quarter of production was lost in the Philippines, while Indonesia also suffered significant losses, contributing to an out of control domestic food price spiral.

Based on preliminary studies, reports, and forecasts, the current El Niño is predicted to be the strongest since 1997. In early 2015, the event is said to have already affected the Indian Monsoons resulting in an uneven distribution of rains and below average rainfall. Uncharacteristic heavy showers in early June over the Indian subcontinent helped to soften a disastrous blow for food production in South Asia.

At the time of writing, it is still too early to tell the full potential damage of the current El Niño on Southeast Asia. Thailand is already

suffering its worst drought in decades which is expected to affect rice production in one of the world's biggest rice exporters. The US Department of Agriculture is already forecasting rice outputs of Thailand to fall by up to 18 per cent, the lowest in over a decade. Indonesia on the other hand is estimating that its palm oil output might decline by 20 per cent in 2015 as a result of El Niño.

Governments have already been warned to brace for the worst. Indonesia and the Philippines have both declared that they are ready to import more food next year to supplement the shortfall due to potential losses in production and yield with the aim of keeping domestic food prices in check. Thailand is putting together a plan to address the drought, to implement measures to help affected farmers cope, and explore the possibility of adjusting cropping patterns, plant alternative crops, or to skip one rice planting season altogether to minimise losses.

The 1997-98 experience for Indonesia saw the onset of its regular rainy season delayed by two months and its duration shortened,

coupled with below average rainfall, leading to significant reductions in yields. The delayed rains also meant delays in planting for a second season contributing to a further loss of production. Total losses incurred as a result of El Niño on agricultural production in 1997 was estimated to be approximately US\$2.5 billion.

Other than the direct impact on crops as a result of drought, there are also indirect effects of the El Niño phenomenon. In the 1997-98 episode, prolonged dry conditions led to 'slash-and-burn' farming practices resulting in uncontrollable wildfires destroying thousands of hectares of vegetation and forests in Indonesia. This also meant the destruction of habitat of countless insects which resulted in them attacking crops constituting a major pest outbreak, which generated greater yield losses.

### **Economic Dimension: ASEAN Economic Community 2015**

The ASEAN Economic Community [AEC] 2015 vision is to establish the member states as a single economic market and production base with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.



*Smallholder farms will be affected by the AEC.  
Photo credit: Asian Development Bank / flickr.*

Theoretically this is expected to have a favourable impact on overall food security in the region. This is however far from conclusive at this point and will depend very much on the steps ASEAN member states take towards achieving this goal.

There are two ways in which the AEC, should it be realised, is likely to bring about a positive impact in food security. Firstly, overall economic growth should drive up incomes and decrease poverty levels. As already seen in many parts of the world, rising incomes and overall economic growth have been the biggest factors in improving food security.

Secondly, agriculture and fisheries are priority sectors in the AEC. A region-wide integration of these sectors would mean better physical access to food from a supply and distribution perspective. It would also mean a greater number of people can access the goods due to lower costs as a result of a reduction in tariffs and logistical and regulatory challenges. There are however, numerous hurdles and challenges which will need to be overcome in order to reap the benefits of the AEC.

Given that the sector still represents a major part of the economy for most countries and continues to employ a large percentage of the labour force, the food and agricultural sectors are highly politicised. So far this has resulted in food and agriculture being subjected to the highest levels of tariffs, quantitative restrictions, exclusion from regional schemes like the Common Effective Preferential Tariffs under the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), and the highest level of protectionism. An overnight change in this regard is therefore highly unlikely.

A long list of food and agricultural products have been included by member state governments into what is known as sensitive and highly-sensitive items, excluding them from the rules. This includes rice, poultry, soybean, maize, beef, pork, beans, sugar,

eggs, various types of fruits and vegetables, and dairy, to name but a few. Without addressing, and hopefully removing, food items from such lists, it is going to be extremely difficult to fully capitalise on the benefits that can be derived from a region-wide single production-base and market.

While an economic community can greatly increase investments and development of the food and agricultural sectors based on comparative strengths of different geographical locations, it will be equally important to understand how such a push would impact smallholder farmers (which still constitute the majority of farmers) and how it will affect earnings of the lower-income groups. It would be detrimental and counter-productive if these groups were to fall further behind.

Other obstacles that need to be addressed include the standardisation of produce in terms of food quality, minimum food safety standards, integration of transport systems, and a regional intellectual property rights (IPR) system. These are all challenges which will take considerable effort to surmount. Finally, the overall regional macro-economic situation as well as currency and foreign exchange regimes will need to be prudent and stable for an economic community to be truly viable.

### **Political Dimension: Protectionism, intervention and the issue of sovereignty**

Food security is highly political and can determine the rise and fall of governments and economies and national food stability. Government intervention in food is thus often deemed necessary for the “protection and preservation of national security.”

Protectionism and intervention in the food and agricultural sector are seen to safeguard national economic interests and address developmental concerns. While the motivation and intentions behind such

policies are often manifold, sometimes they come at high risks and costs. Of late some of these policies have been justified under the banner of “food sovereignty”.

Food sovereignty tries to put the concept of the rights of farmers and the food insecure at the front and centre of food security debates. The principles of food sovereignty are predicated on the notion that people should not fall under – what is perceived as inequitable and unjust – IPR regimes or international terms of trade. The deliberate vagueness of the “food sovereignty” concept has increasingly been used to justify a range of protectionist and interventionist policies by national governments in the region.

Many governments have justified their policies on national sovereignty and security grounds. This has gained traction since the 2007-08 global food price crisis, which was seen as a failure of international markets and food security policies based on or around international trade.

RSIS fieldwork in Southeast Asia has shown that self-sufficiency policies are gaining interest and support among many governments. Indonesia, Malaysia and the

Philippines are already pursuing such a direction. Such protectionist and nationalistic trends go against plans like the establishment of the AEC and bring into question the political conviction of regional efforts.

Governments seem to indicate that they intend to continue to implement another interventionist practice common in the region, which is to stockpile food commodities and maintain ‘buffer’ stocks for national security in the short to medium term. These practices are in stark contrast to the purportedly freer trade policies, improved transportation services, and just-in-time delivery efficiencies that the AEC is trying to promote.

The evolution of any of the factors highlighted above is likely to have significant implications on the food security of Southeast Asia in the immediate and longer term. Keeping close tabs on these environmental, economic and political issues will therefore be crucial. How the region, as a collective, addresses these in the next year will determine the extent to which these factors will have a positive effect or whether it will roll back the hard earned gains of reducing the number of food insecure in the last few years.



*The food sovereignty movement has become an influential and important grassroots movement in many developing countries including in Southeast Asia.  
Photo credit: Carlos Fernandez/ Flickr*

## Perilous Passage for Better Futures

By Zin Bo Htet

Migration issues in 2015 captured the world's attention as hundreds of thousands of people fled war and sought safe haven by perilous means as was seen with more than 750,000 migrants crossing the Mediterranean and an estimated 25,000 Rohingyas and Bangladeshis crossing the Bay of Bengal via dangerous sea journeys. People are fleeing their homes due to warfare, poverty, disasters, conflicts or persecution in record numbers. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) annual Global Trends Report released on 18 June stated that worldwide forced displacement is at its highest level; 59.5 million at the end of 2014.



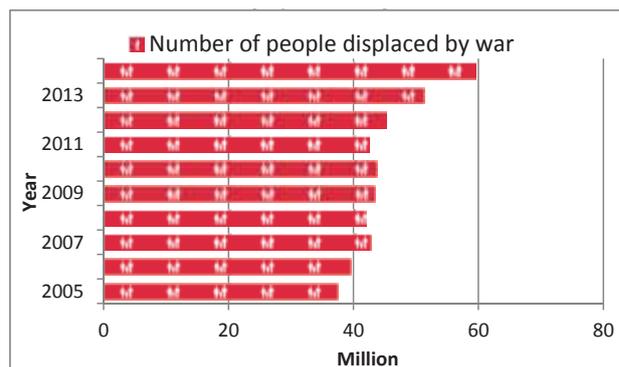
Massive influx of Syrian Kurdish refugees into Turkey. Photo credit: Freedom House / flickr.

### Migration is a Global Crisis

This record is driven by multiple crises worldwide, involving Africans and Middle Easterners entering Europe, Central Americans moving to the U.S., Rohingyas Muslims escaping Myanmar, and civilians fleeing warfare and conflicts in Syria, Somalia, Pakistan, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burundi, Yemen and more. One of the most recent and significant consequences of the conflicts has been the dramatic rise in the number of people undertaking risky sea journeys to find safety, including in

Southeast Asia, crossing the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

The total number of forced displaced in Europe reached 6.7 million at the end of 2014, (compared to 4.4 million at the end of 2013). In July 2015, overall numbers of migrants entering the EU was 107,500 in just a single month. In Asia, the refugee condition is similarly tragic. The number of refugees and internally displaced people across the region increased by 31 per cent in 2014 to 9 million people. While the international community focused on the plight of the Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine state, the problems in the region extend beyond that group. Refugees seeking asylum in Southeast Asia also come from countries further away such as China, Bangladesh, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Sri-Lanka and Pakistan. The recent repatriation of 109 ethnic Uighurs to China, a Muslim minority group seeking asylum in Thailand, highlights the nature of the refugee crisis in the region.



The number of people forcibly displaced at the end of 2014 rose to a staggering 59.5 million compared to 51.2 million a year earlier and 37.5 million a decade ago (global figures).

Source: UNHCR, Global Trends: World at War, 2015.



*Rohingya refugees who left behind the persecution faced in Myanmar are now caught in a trap between Myanmar and Bangladesh, stateless, unregistered, without food and lacking work. Photo credit: Denotix.com / flickr*

### Are they ‘Migrants’ or ‘Refugees’?

Along with the migration crisis around the world and record numbers of forced displacements, the terms ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’ are commonly seen in media headlines. In fact, the two terms have different and distinct meanings. Refugees are people escaping warfare or persecution, and their circumstance is so dangerous and insecure that they cross national borders to find safety in other countries. They are globally recognized as refugees with supposed access to aid from countries and international organizations. Migrants on the other hand are persons leaving their place of origin in order to improve their quality of life. Unlike refugees, migrants can safely return home and reside in a safe environment.

It is important for governments to understand the distinction between ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’. While migrants are bound to a country’s immigration laws, refugees are accorded refugee protection by norms defined in international law. Governments have certain responsibilities towards the care of refugees in their countries or at their borders. The ambiguous labeling of migrants and refugees can have severe consequences on the lives and safety of refugees. Legal protection laws for refugees will not be practiced if migrants and refugees are

conflated. One of the most fundamental principles in international law is that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom are under threat.

The large numbers of people arriving by boat in Greece and Italy are seeking asylum and fleeing countries mired in war or persecution. Nevertheless, some governments saw the overwhelming majority of these new arrivals as ‘illegal migrants’ seeking a better life, while others accuse them of being a security threat to the whole of Europe and are thus reluctant to acknowledge and accept them as refugees. In Southeast Asia, displaced Rohingya people were referred to as ‘irregular migrants’. Under this label, the crisis was not tackled for weeks as Rohingya people were seen as victims of human trafficking and smuggling rather than of state persecution.

### Southeast Asia’s Legal and Institutional Framework

In Southeast Asia, there are no common agreements on migration except for a nascent process for the mutual recognition of the qualifications of highly skilled professionals. Among the ten ASEAN member states, only Cambodia and the Philippines are

parties to the United Nations Refugee Convention. Both Indonesia and Malaysia are not members of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is the biggest multilateral institution dealing with migration. Myanmar, the main source of the 'irregular migration' by sea, denied that Rohingya are citizens and refused to acknowledge any responsibility for them. There is subsequently little common ground for dealing with a mixed flow of migrants and refugees that affects multiple ASEAN countries in different ways.

Nevertheless, most ASEAN member states are party to two bodies of international law; transnational crime and international maritime law. Most member states, except Bangladesh and Brunei, have signed the anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking protocols to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Similarly, most have signed the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) and the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). In addition, all ASEAN countries are members of the Bali Process on people trafficking and smuggling in persons. These ratifications may suggest

a way to stronger regional cooperation on migration at sea, focusing on the priorities of saving lives and countering smuggling.

## Future Prospects

In Southeast Asia, regional cooperation that emphasizes the safeguard of refugees and asylum seekers remains a highly politically sensitive issue and all ASEAN member states need to play a proactive role to address the humanitarian needs of those at risk. Moreover, ASEAN's primary commitment to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs hinders the establishment of supranational frameworks aimed at addressing the region's transnational challenges. The ad hoc and variable nature of countries' responses to irregular migration in the region reflects the absence of regional cooperation for addressing displacement and migration challenges. Without regional cooperation and member states taking responsibility for the protection of asylum seekers and refugees, the region will continue to face similar crises and the number of people lost at sea will continue to grow.



*Hungarian Defense Force install barbed wire to prevent illegal migrants from entering the country near Kelebia village in Hungary.*

*Photo credit: Freedom House / flickr.*

# The Southeast Asian Boat People Crisis

By Zin Bo Htet

In May 2015, thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh were found stranded in the Straits of Malacca and the Andaman Sea. According to UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates, about 25,000 people were taken on boats by human traffickers between January and March 2015. These migrants were collectively labeled as 'boat people' by the international media. The image of shabby boats overloaded with Muslim Rohingya refugees in despair with limited supplies of food and water seized international attention and harked back to the Indo-Chinese exodus that gripped the region in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Rohingya are commonly recognized as the world's most persecuted people and is a Muslim ethnic minority group residing in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. Under Myanmar's 1982 citizenship law, the Rohingya people were left without citizenship. The Myanmar government refuses to recognize the Rohingya as a local ethnic group. Due to a lack of legal protection from the Myanmar government as well as religious persecution, many Rohingya have fled Myanmar by sea to other Southeast Asian countries.

In this particular crisis, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia initially turned away refugee boats after providing them with food, water and fuel to continue on their journey. Each government declared that its country was not the desired destination of the refugees. Meanwhile the European Union urged Myanmar to bring an end to its religious conflicts and the persecution

of the Rohingya minority. Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were roundly criticised by the international community for turning away the ships. Hundreds of boat people were rescued by Acehnese fisherman and some landed in Malaysia and other parts of Indonesia on their own.

Following an emergency meeting on 20 May 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Indonesia signed an agreement to take in 7,000 boat people and to provide temporary shelter for them. Search and rescue missions took place two days after signing the agreement. However, not many boat people were found, raising the question of how many had already died as a result of the regional governments' slow response. The temporary acceptance of the Rohingya boat people by providing shelter for only a year will not solve the root problems of this crisis.

The solution has to come from an internal change in Myanmar. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Myanmar has 541,100 people in need of humanitarian aid, 139,000 people displaced in Rakhine State and 100,000 people displaced in Kachin State. The Myanmar government, with support from ASEAN and the international community, would need to tackle the problem of religious persecution of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable and displaced people in the country in order to prevent a similar crisis in future.



Vessels used to traffic Rohingya and Bangladeshi refugees. Photo credit: United to End Genocide / flickr

## Prioritising Climate Adaptation for Disaster Risk Reduction

By Goh Tian



Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, 14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan  
Credit: UNISDR / flickr.

At the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in March 2015, UN member states adopted the post-2015 Sendai framework for DRR for the period 2015-2030. The framework highlighted the need for coherence across the development, climate change and DRR agendas and acknowledged climate impacts as one of the drivers of disaster risk. Priorities for action in the new framework called for greater focus on building resilience to disasters, multi-hazard risk assessments including climate scenarios, as well as the mainstreaming of DRR into national laws, regulations and policies.

### Priorities for Action: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

There have been a number of disasters and extreme weather events this year. Thailand was hit by drought while Myanmar faced a flood crisis. More than a million people were affected by the floods, which were aggravated by Cyclone Komen, in Myanmar. The flooding destroyed roads, villages and

infrastructure. Both Thailand and Myanmar also saw losses in harvests. According to sources, drought in Thailand affected 160,000 hectares of rice fields in February and another 960,000 hectares in July, while 486,000 hectares of farmland in Myanmar was affected by the floods. Drought also reduced Indonesia's projected rice production by 800,000 tons.

Humanitarian assistance was rendered in Myanmar with food relief and emergency aid. In Thailand, loans of 60 billion baht were approved for emergency funds and long-term assistance for farmers. While the government's response in Myanmar is a stark improvement from its response during Cyclone Nargis in 2008, more can be done.

According to Global Humanitarian Assistance, between 2003 and 2012, flooding and droughts were the natural disasters that resulted in the largest affected populations. Most humanitarian funding is allocated for emergency response and post disaster response. Only 13 percent of total international funding for natural disasters from 1990 to 2010 was for DRR, of which only 7 percent was for flood prevention and control. Despite the increase in attention to DRR, international humanitarian assistance's focus on resilience and adaptation is lacking and the race is constantly on to respond to disasters. This short-sighted reactive approach, together with the likelihood of more frequent and intense extreme weather events, will only create a vicious cycle of disaster response. Breaking out of this cycle requires the inclusion of DRR in disaster response and recovery. This can build greater resilience in communities which face natural disasters.

## Preparing for Climate Change

Climate change is set to bring changes to weather patterns, water availability and crop yields. Climatic factors and water availability are also likely to result in greater volatility in food production. These have a cascading effect on poverty and the vulnerability of populations, especially during a disaster. Hence, it is vital that long term preparedness for disaster risks include anticipatory climate adaptation measures; measures that are implemented to reduce loss and damage during a disaster, such as flooding.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provides an all-encompassing approach towards DRR, with both reactive and anticipatory responses. This is a crucial step forward in the area of disaster response. Adequate plans for humanitarian assistance and response can help countries to react to a disaster, but do not help to reduce the damage due to the disaster.

Investments in more sophisticated irrigation systems, new rice varieties, systems to hedge against risks such as crop insurance are adaptation measures that can help to reduce climate impacts on water and food production systems. Other anticipatory adaptation measures to reduce loss and damage during disasters include the construction of infrastructure for coastal regions, the preservation of important eco-systems such as mangroves and flood management systems. Further monitoring of climate data and projections such as temperature, precipitation and humidity can also provide more information on the adequate measures that can be taken at the regional, local and national level. For example, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent have contributed to global efforts for climate adaptation by funding a climate projections database.

In addition, disaster recovery efforts can also address long term impacts of climate change. Rehabilitation of farmlands, rebuilding of infrastructure such as canals, dykes, roads and buildings can take into account possible



Recovery efforts after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia  
Credit:  
ILO in Asia and the Pacific / flickr.

changes in soil salinity, rising sea-levels and changes in precipitation. Incorporating long term planning into disaster recovery will reduce risks in the event of another disaster.

## **Integrating the Humanitarian Economy into DRR and Adaptation**

While international humanitarian assistance has provided much needed aid and helped communities in disaster recovery, the focus of the humanitarian economy on reducing risks and building resilience is still lacking. The humanitarian economy can move towards a more systematic funding of national adaptation and DRR especially in developing countries. With the momentum from the recently adopted Sendai Framework, together with the post-2020 global climate agreement in Paris, countries and organisations should seek to make climate adaptation and disaster resilience a reality – by starting with financing.

One key difficulty of integrating financing is attaining a suitable balance between funding for disaster recovery and resilience. Organisations need to provide immediate

aid in the event of a disaster and further justification is required for long-term adaptation and resilience programmes. DRR assistance can also be confounded with developmental aid, creating a host of political issues and overlapping responsibilities.

One method of intervention is through climate financing. The similarities between disaster risk and climate risk warrant a deeper look at how humanitarian, DRR and climate financing can complement each other. Integrating financing across climate adaptation and DRR is a key step towards encouraging humanitarian actors to move towards greater focus on anticipatory adaptation and disaster resilience. Some efforts have been undertaken in this respect. For example, the Warsaw mechanism for Loss and Damage under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) includes both risk assessment and responses to climate impacts. The inclusion of risk management as one of the three key assistance areas is a step forward in integrating disaster financing with long-term climate risk assessment.



*Flooded house Kawlin Township, Myanmar  
Credit: International Organization for Migration / flickr*

## Myanmar Flood Crisis

By Goh Tian

Cyclone Komen hit Myanmar in August 2015, exacerbating existing floods that had inundated much of Central and Western Myanmar. More than a million people were affected, with 200,000 needing lifesaving assistance and about 150,000 homes were destroyed. In Rakhine state alone, 140,000 children and families were displaced. It was a flashback to Cyclone Nargis, which hit Myanmar in 2008, killing 84,500 people and affecting 2.4 million people.

Humanitarian aid efforts in 2008 were hampered by the military junta, which refused to allow western humanitarian aid workers to enter the country. This situation has improved, with the government appealing for international assistance for the 2015 flood crisis. Immediate assistance was rendered in the form of food aid, temporary shelter, clothing and water. Recovery efforts are likely to continue.

While initial foreign aid flows were stalled in 2008, the Myanmar Red Cross Society

managed to assist in disaster recovery by providing shelter, basic health care, water and sanitation. Early warning systems, schools, programmes to restart farming and training in disaster preparedness were also some initiatives launched to increase the community's disaster resilience and helped to rebuild livelihoods.

Yet, even with these efforts, a repeat of the 2008 crisis, just 7 years later, suggests the strong need to invest in risk reduction measures that go beyond existing facilities such as installing early warning systems for evacuation. These include investments in physical infrastructure such as drainage systems and dykes, as well as investing in comprehensive adaptive delta management. An extension of these long-term responses and investments can include investments in flood-tolerant rice varieties to safeguard food security and livelihoods, as well as better management of water resources to prevent salt water intrusion or contamination during flooding events. These measures help to enhance the resilience of communities against future flooding events, potentially reducing the damage during a disaster and subsequent costs associated with aid and recovery.

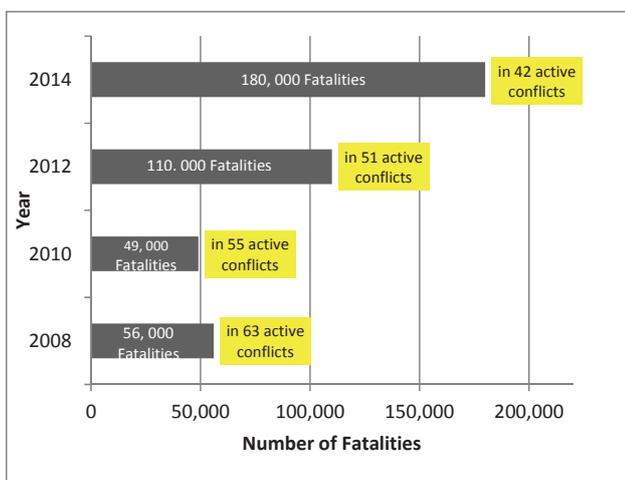


*Flooding in Myanmar  
Credit: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent  
Societies / flickr.*

## Conflicts and the Walk towards Peace

By Vishalini Sagar

Conflicts and fragile governance represent a ubiquitous challenge to many countries in the world. The 2015 annual report by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) stated that the divide between the most peaceful and the least peaceful countries have widened significantly. In fact, tens of thousands more civilians are being killed in armed conflicts around the world each year. In 2008 for example, based on the first-ever armed conflict survey published by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 56,000 civilians died in armed conflicts, whereas in 2004, 180,000 were killed in conflicts. The Middle East and North Africa rank as the top most violent regions with the most number of civilian deaths due to conflicts in Syria and Iraq, followed by South Asia which was the second most violent place in the world last year. Ethnic clashes in Southern Thailand and Nepal, religious and ethnic tensions involving Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and the Bangasamoro conflict in the Philippines are some of the most prominent communal violence that have gained attention in 2015. Most of them have endured over time.



Global fatalities from active conflicts.  
Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 2015



A painting by Dutch artist Martin Travers illustrating ethnic protests in Nepal.  
Photo credit: Nagarjun Kandukuru / flickr

Syria, now in its fifth year of civil war, remains the world's most lethal conflict zone. The Syrian crisis has spilled onto the shores of Asia, and it is quickly evolving into a global human security catastrophe of major proportions. Many countries in Asia are grappling with the spread of jihadist terrorism, fuelled by extremist perversions of Islam. A recent study has shown that Southeast Asia has become a key recruitment centre for ISIS with an estimated 500 Indonesians and several Malaysians pledging allegiance to the terror group. External terrorism can act as a threat multiplier to a state when coupled with pre-existing non-traditional security challenges such as poverty, unemployment and political repression. States which are struggling with poor and failing governance can quickly become breeding grounds for religious terrorists, posing a threat to the entire region through increased terrorist attacks.

Thousands of Myanmar Rohingya Muslims have been fleeing Myanmar since early 2015, mainly by sea in the hope of seeking refuge in neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The exodus of Rohingya Muslims is a reflection

of the long standing crisis in Myanmar and decades of oppression in Rakhine state. Systemic discriminatory policies by the Myanmar government, such as refusal to grant Rohingya Muslims citizenship status, restrictions on marriage and employment, impositions on religion and the curbing of freedom of movement have led to their departure for safer lands. Many Rohingya Muslims deplete their entire life savings to pay smugglers for illegal passage out of Myanmar, risking the precarious boat journey to escape dire repression and grave poverty. Unfortunately, their plight is aggravated by lethargic responses from the countries that the Rohingya Muslims have been hoping to seek asylum in. Statistics show that hundreds of Rohingya Muslim asylum seekers have lost their lives while attempting to enter Southeast Asian states.

The long-standing civil unrest in the Malay-Muslim provinces of southern Thailand has garnered global attention due to heightened tensions in the area, large scale rebel attacks, and the central government's incompetence in managing the situation. In the latest outbreak of violence in July, three people died when a motorcycle bomb exploded outside a bar in southern Songkhla province, which borders the conflict-torn regions of the Buddhist-majority country. Shortly after that incident a middle-aged Muslim man was shot in the same area by a number of gunmen.

Similarly in Nepal, there has been increasing protests against a draft constitution addressing long-standing grievances of women and ethnic groups such as the Madhesi, Tharu, Dalit and Janajati, who represent a large majority of the population. They assert that the old system discriminated and marginalised them from state institutions, developments and political authority. The draft of a constitution has been put on hold for nine years and many have asserted that the latest draft on 8 August 2015 does not effectively deliver on previous commitments to build an inclusive society. At least 23 civilians died and hundreds were injured during protests in the two weeks after the draft institution was made known to the public.

From February to June this year, Myanmar's military was fighting a brutal conflict against ethnic Kokang guerillas in the northern Shan state of Myanmar, along the border with China, till a unilateral ceasefire was announced by the rebels under pressure from the Chinese government. Dating back to 2009, the conflict began when the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) launched an attack to reclaim land lost to Myanmar's army, costing many lives on both sides. Though China has reached out to the country's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi on this issue, a peace agreement has yet to be established.



*Nantun district in the northern Shan State of Myanmar where most of the population are ethnic Chinese. This area is only 5km away from the Myanmar – China Border.  
Photo credit: David and Jessie / flickr*

In the Philippines, there has been an ongoing conflict in a Muslim-majority area in the Mindanao region, now known as Bangsamoro. The main armed groups in Mindanao are fighting for self-determination as they argue that they have been marginalised by the region's Christian population. The armed groups are pushing for the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) to be passed in Congress, a bill that would provide a governance framework for the region. However, a general consensus is yet to be found.

In 2015, just like decades ago, the walk towards peace has been a long, tedious and brutal process regardless of the region or the scale of the conflict. Identity (or lack of it) is a major cause of conflicts in the world today. While in some countries, conflicts are a daily threat to society, other countries are exposed to them through 'triggers' - unresolved and sensitive problems that are raised by an individual or group. In most cases, time has not helped resolve these issues. They might subside for a while, or fighting parties could run out of resources to continue their battle, however, unresolved conflicts never just go away. History presents us with many

such examples - just like in the case of civil conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and border wars between India and Pakistan. How do we then resolve conflicts and ensure sustainable international peace and security?

There is no single approach or solution to ensure peace in all countries. More often than not, traditional conflict resolution tends to focus on short term gains and seeks to address clearly evident symptoms of conflicts. However, the chronic undercurrent of conflict that is always present even when not personified, typically gets ignored or not addressed. Though the root causes of most conflicts are similar in nature, the dynamics of each conflict is considerably different. Multilateral co-operation, mediation and giving an ethnic group autonomous rule over their region are some common proposals used to resolve conflicts. However, there is seldom a consensus by opposing forces on the conditions of the agreement. And this is why the study of non-traditional security seeks to be critical as it seeks to appreciate and understand these nuances so as to develop more effective and sustainable solutions towards attaining international peace and security.



*An informal tented settlement in Lebanon's Bekka valley that houses Syrian refugees. The mountains in the background form Lebanon's border with Syria.*

*Photo credit: UK Department for International Development / flickr*

# The Bangsamoro Basic Law

By Celina Yulo Loyzaga



*The Mamasapano Bridge, Inland Waters of the BAR.  
Photo credit: Patricia Araneta (Outreach Director of the Prince's School of Traditional Arts).*

The Muslim population in the Philippines has historically claimed areas within the nation as their ancestral domain. Since the formation of the Republic of the Philippines, this has been particularly difficult as the majority of the population in those areas is not of the same religious denomination. This has resulted in further deterioration of relations and more severe terrorism and violence. In an attempt to bring peace to historically claimed areas in the Mindanao region, the Philippine Government put forward the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

The BBL House Bill No. 4994, is an act currently being deliberated in the Philippines Congress to create a new autonomous political entity called the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BAR). This would replace the current Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and is the main political document through which the current Philippine Government is negotiating peace with the the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebel group. All other indigenous populations (IPs) have been marginalized throughout the entire negotiation process with little or no mention in the entire bill.

Under the bill, the Bangsamoro Government will govern both inland and territorial waters. As such, they will have sovereign rights over such waters, making it impassable and illegal for other Filipinos to traverse and fish

in without permission. More lucratively, the newly formed Bangsamoro Government with sovereign rights has the right under the United Nations Law of the Sea, to exploit all natural resources in the water or under the seabed. Not only does this jeopardize the Philippines' recognition as an archipelagic nation, but it also allows for the exploitation of natural resources irrespective of the position of the Philippine Government.

Additionally, entry into the BAR during times of crisis will be more difficult given the BAR's sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the waters. Given this, 'keeping the peace' within the BAR region cannot be assured by the Philippine state. Furthermore, creating a new Bangsamoro police that is part of but not subject to the Philippine National Police can create discontinuity in terms of standard operating procedures and other protocols. The establishment of Shar'iah law in the region further propels discontinuity as Muslim citizens will be held to different standards.

BBL negotiations have primarily included the MILF alone, leaving all other IPs excluded and further marginalized. With the freedom to remove town and village (barangay) boundaries, the Bangsamoro Government and the MILF will now have the power to uproot existing residents, including IPs from their homes and ancestral domains as they see fit. Such a situation would be counter to 'freedom from fear'. Exclusion of other IPs, more specifically of the Lumads, who have approximately 500,000 people in the Bangsamoro area will be highly problematic. As it is currently written, the lack of inclusiveness of the BBL will determine the acceptability and sustainability of the act.

# Launch of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Programme

By Zin Bo Htet

Natural disasters have affected countries all over the world and efforts from humanitarian groups have made it possible to reach out to people regardless of the “borders” nations have built. It is alarming to note that approximately 25 per cent of the world’s conflicts have occurred in the Asia-Pacific region alone and was a catalyst for a mission by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University to establish a new research programme. With a view to supporting and strengthening the responses among different stakeholders, the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme was launched on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, led the inauguration of the HADR Programme. In his speech, he emphasized how RSIS can contribute to developing Singapore as a global thought leader as well as to build capacities and innovative approaches towards making humanitarian assistance more effective in the Asia Pacific region. Ambassador Ong also reiterated the importance of non-traditional security and stressed the programme’s ability to tap RSIS’ expertise to leverage on the recent establishment of the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) and drive regional cooperation in HADR efforts.

Guests from various humanitarian sectors attended the event, including civilian organizations and government agencies, representatives from the military, NGOs, regional organizations, United Nations, the Red Cross movement, faith-based organizations and civil society groups. The welcoming speech was delivered by Associate Professor Mely Caballero Anthony, Head of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies who highlighted that this programme is “very timely and relevant” given that more than half

of the world’s natural disasters occurred in the Asia-Pacific region in 2014.

Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and one of Singapore’s leading experts on HADR delivered the keynote address. She was personally involved in disaster relief efforts in three major disasters in the region – the destructive tsunami in Aceh, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the 2011 floods in Thailand. In her speech, she said that the HADR Programme has a critical role to play in improving the capacity of humanitarian actors in the region and facilitating the emergence of a new humanitarian model of partnership by bringing multiple stakeholders in unity to forge solutions to present and future humanitarian crises.

RSIS will contribute to the HADR infrastructure through interdisciplinary and policy- relevant research that will develop global leaders for the future HADR landscape; examine community fragilities and resilience towards conflict and disasters; investigate the effectiveness of humanitarian aid; and explore the impact of technology on emergency action. The HADR programme, run by both the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies and the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies will be coordinated by Dr Alistair D. B. Cook and will use a multi-dimensional and holistic approach in assessing humanitarian aid and emergency preparedness capacities in the region.



Ambassador Ong Keng Yong (right) launched the HADR Programme with Dr Noeleen Heyzer  
Photo credit: RSIS

## Activities and Publications 2015

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies continues to lead research in the areas of (1) climate change, resilience and sustainable development; (2) energy security; (3) food security; (4) health security; (5) peace, human security and development; and (6) water security (7) humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

In 2015, the Centre focused on projects related to the themes of food security and nuclear energy development in Southeast Asia, and pursued activities under the ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership. It also established a new Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) program

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to explore important developments within the field in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

It published numerous books and articles in connection with these projects, both via external channels and through its in-house publications – NTS Bulletin, NTS Policy Brief, NTS Working Paper Series, NTS Report, ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership Working Paper Series, and the NTS Event Report. All Centre publications continue to be well-received in academic and policy circles.

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*Paul P.S. Teng and Jurise Athena Oliveros*

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*Akanksha Sharma*

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14–15 May 2015, Singapore

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21–23 July 2015, Singapore

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19 August 2015, Singapore

Seminar on Human Security, Transnational Law and Non-State Actors: Revisiting 'Old Ideas' by Dr Math Noortmann  
31 August 2015, Singapore

Seminar on Toward a Sustainable Recovery Through Education: The Role of Faith Based Organisations in Disaster Relief Work by Dr Sng Bee Bee  
2 September 2015, Singapore

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12–13 October 2015, Jakarta

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15–16 October 2015, Singapore

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22–23 October 2015, Singapore

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29 October 2015, Singapore

RSIS Roundtable at the Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW) "Is Southeast Asia Ready for Nuclear Power?"  
30 October 2015, Singapore

Book Launch Seminar on "Blood, Dreams and Gold: The Changing Face of Burma" by Dr Richard Cockett  
30 October 2015, Singapore

Seminar on 'After Liberal Peace' by Oliver Richmond  
24 November 2015, Singapore

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1 December 2015, Singapore

## The NTS-Asia Consortium

Initiated through a Ford Foundation grant, the NTS-Asia Consortium was launched in January 2007 as a network of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) research institutes and think tanks. The RSIS NTS Centre leads and coordinates this Consortium as its Secretariat. The aims of the consortium are as follows:

1.	To develop a platform for networking and intellectual exchange between regional NTS scholars and analysts
2.	To build long-term and sustainable regional capacity for research on NTS issues
3.	To mainstream and advance the field of non-traditional security studies in Asia
4.	To collate and manage a regional database of NTS publications and other resources

Network members meet annually to share recent research findings and draw up policy recommendations on Asian NTS issues. The NTS-Asia website is a useful repository of publications, recent developments in the field and e-newsletters. Consortium members also accorded special invitations to partners as speakers, experts and mentors for events, meetings and roundtable discussions.

### Moving Forward

RSIS intends to reactivate the NTS-Asia Consortium in 2016 with a network relaunch incorporating a number of new elements. The purpose of this revival is to re-establish the consortium's significance and value to NTS research in the region, and to reemphasize the increasingly relevant and urgent need to focus on transnational and multilateral non-traditional security issues. The following elements will be incorporated or revitalized during the relaunch:

1.	<b>Stronger virtual presence</b> through a new user-friendly, interactive website with a larger, more efficient capacity and system for the NTS resource database, as well as dedicated manpower to recreate, manage and maintain the website and database.
2.	<b>Opportunities for regional meetings</b> for continued exchange of NTS research output and information, as well as to forge new research partnerships.
3.	<b>Internships, fellowships and mentorships</b> for young researchers, analysts or scholars to better capacity-build regional NTS expertise.
4.	<b>Knowledge exchanges with civil society groups, NGOs and other stakeholders</b> for broader first-hand input into policy briefs as well as more effective implementation of NTS-related strategies and policies on the ground.
5.	<b>Policy and research communication</b> to multi-level and multi-dimensional stakeholders including governments, NGOs, and relevant international and local agencies.

*For more information on the NTS-Asia Consortium, please log on to: <http://www.rsis-ntsasia.org/>.*

*To enquire about membership or collaborations with the Consortium, please contact the RSIS NTS-Asia Consortium Coordinator, Serina Rahman ([isserina@ntu.edu.my](mailto:isserina@ntu.edu.my) / +65-67905889).*

## About the RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, NTU

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS) conducts research and produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The centre addresses knowledge gaps, facilitates discussions and analyses, engages policymakers and contributes to building institutional capacity in non-traditional security issues. These include challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise from non-military sources, such as climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime. These dangers are transnational in scope, defying unilateral remedies and requiring comprehensive – political, economic and social – responses, as well as the humanitarian use of military force.

### OUR RESEARCH

- 1. Food Security** – This programme focuses on the impact of climate change on food production and availability; the dynamics of food stocks in a changing regional environment; and dynamic modelling of food availability. The challenges to Asian food security amidst price volatility, environmental degradation, growing populations and changing food preferences, and the drivers of these changes are investigated. NTS is also the host of the biennial International Conference on Asian Food Security involving leading global food research institutes and their scholars.
- 2. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief** – This programme facilitates and enhances cooperation on preparedness and response strategies to the fragile and unpredictable situations we face in the Asia-Pacific. Aside from comprehensively investigating regional emergency response frameworks, governance issues, disaster preparedness strategies and the identification and development of response niches for civilian and military actors, the programme also seeks to develop the next generation of global leaders in HADR through roundtable sessions, dialogues and workshops.
- 3. Health Security** – In response to the needs of a highly connected world facing regular and increasing threats of globally infectious diseases, NTS examines health emergency response networks, pandemic preparedness and global health governance. Research identifies critical health actors; explores the effective implementation of long-term preventive and capacity-building health initiatives; promotes multilateral cooperation; and advances global health diplomacy. The centre also looks into socio-economic and environmental factors that impact health security.
- 4. Climate Change, Environmental Resilience and Sustainable Development** – This programme examines regional adaptations to climate change and its impact on development through social-, economic- and institutional-resilience building as the key to reducing vulnerabilities and a means of shaping regional security and stability. Research investigates the effects of climate change on the food, health and water security of ASEAN marginalised communities; the conditions and mechanisms that underpin policy adoption and investment in climate change adaptation; multi-level and multi-stakeholder interactions on climate change; and the development of a more anticipatory institutional architecture that can integrate sustainable development, climate adaptation and resilience.
- 5. Energy Security** - Using the framework of multi-level regional governance, the energy security programme explores

pathways toward building a robust framework for nuclear energy safety, security and safeguards in ASEAN and the wider Asia-Pacific region. The programme will advance regional cooperation in nuclear energy governance; garner lessons and guidelines from global nuclear norms through analyses of legislative frameworks; examine the prospects for an ASEAN blueprint for nuclear energy; and build capacity for effective regional nuclear administration and implementation.

**6. Peace, Human Security and Development** - This programme assesses different challenges to peace, security and development across the Asia-Pacific. Research in this field seeks to understand drivers of conflict and instability and how a human security approach can help address security challenges. This programme also examines new approaches and norms in addressing conflict and insecurities such as the responsibility to protect.

## OUR OUTPUT

### Policy Relevant Publications

The NTS Centre produces a range of output such as research reports, books, monographs, policy briefs and conference proceedings.

### Training

Based in RSIS, which has an excellent record of post-graduate teaching, an international faculty and an extensive network of policy institutes worldwide, the Centre is well-placed to develop robust research capabilities, conduct training courses and facilitate advanced education on NTS. These are aimed at, but not limited to, academics, analysts, policymakers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

### Networking and Outreach

The NTS Centre serves as a networking hub for researchers, policy analysts, policymakers, NGOs and media from across

Asia and further afield interested in NTS issues and challenges.

The NTS Centre is the Coordinator of the ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership (2012-2015) supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. It also serves as the Secretariat of the initiative.

In 2009, the NTS Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for its three-year Asia Security Initiative (2009-2012), to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific.

It is also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia Consortium).

More information on the NTS Centre is available at:

<http://www.rsis.edu.sg/research/nts/>.

## About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. RSIS' mission is to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of security studies and international affairs. Its core functions are research, graduate education and networking. It produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Region Studies. RSIS' activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific.

For more information about RSIS, please visit <http://www.rsis.edu.sg>

# Notes

