

BACKGROUND

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was established on 8 August 1967 with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined on 7 January 1984, Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today ASEAN.

As a member of ASEAN, member states are expected cooperatively prepare to integrate under the three community pillars, namely political-security community, economic community, and socio-cultural community. ASEAN Leaders decided to move up the target date of ASEAN Economic Community building to 31 December 2015. Member states have relentlessly worked towards meeting targets to integrate and transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labor, and freer flow of capital across borders.

Since 1999, Cambodia has relentlessly made efforts to meet commitments given to ASEAN in order to facilitate regional integration of political-security, economics, and socio-cultural aspects. Needless to say, there is a continual need to raise awareness and understanding of Cambodia and ASEAN's development efforts toward community building; a need for dialogue to examine achievements, challenges, and opportunities presented by the ASEAN Community; a need to disseminate information on community integration efforts to the general public; a need to develop appropriate policy measures to cooperatively work with and benefit from the ASEAN Economic Community. Moreover, we need to clearly examine how Cambodia has been able to successfully develop and transform in the last 20 years, in order to reap the benefit of the ASEAN Community in the future.

In the light of the above, the ASEAN Study Center of the University of Cambodia launches a conference entitled "The Silk Road to the ASEAN Community: Achievements, Challenges, and Future Directions."

OBJECTIVES

- To organize officials from the public and private sectors, research community, scholars, civil society members, NGOs, international development partners, and students to collectively examine Cambodia and ASEAN's efforts toward building the ASEAN Economic Community
- To advance Cambodia's efforts to meet its targets and commitments given to ASEAN
- To exchange views and perspectives on the best path to sustain Cambodia's development in an integrated community
- To enrich knowledge and understanding about Cambodia and ASEAN
- To share experiences on the achievements that have been made, to examine the challenges that still need to be overcome, to explore opportunities offered, and the future directions of an integrated ASEAN Community
- To collect policy recommendations for the Royal Government of Cambodia and the ASEAN Secretariat in order to foster ASEAN Community building

Conference

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To this end, the conference on “The Silk Road to the ASEAN Community: Achievements, Challenges, and Future Directions” explores the seven major areas in depth:

Session I: ASEAN Political-Security Community: Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities

Session II: Keeping Pace With Targets and Commitments Given to ASEAN: Politics, Policy, and People

Session III: Dialogue Partners' Contributions to the ASEAN Community

Session IV: ASEAN Economic Community (AEC): The Path Towards Sustainable Development - Matching Rhetoric With Action

Session V: Cooperative Strategies to Sustain a Prosperous ASEAN Community

Session VI: ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Implications on Identities, Religions, Ethnic Groups, Traditions and Cultures

Session VII: Policy Recommendations for Reform