



CESDAsia
CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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>>> NEWSLETTER <<<

AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

WELCOME ADDRESS

DR. S SATHYA MOORTHY S SUBRAMANIAM

Welcome dear readers to our CESDASIA newsletter, an Asian Perspective. We are thrilled to have you join us on this journey of discovery and inspiration. As you delve into the pages of our publication, we hope you find stories that resonate with you, articles that spark your curiosity, and images that captivate your imagination...

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AMB. RAHUL CHHABRA IFS

India has been widely and willingly sharing with other countries of the Global South its developmental experiences and technical expertise, despite its own massive resource constraints. This spirit of "VasudhaivaKutumbakam" is explained in the words of Gandiji, who said, "I do want to think in terms of the whole world..."

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Asia is by far one of the world's most dynamic and promising regions. As a member of the Asian family and a responsible country in the international community, China has always been a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, and a defender of international order. China is committed to building a new type of international relation...

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CHINA'S VISION FOR GLOBAL HARMONY: A COMMITMENT TO PEACE, DEVELOPMENT, AND COOPERATION IN ASIA

DR. YUAN BING

WELCOME ADDRESS



Dr. S Sathya Moorthy S Subramaniam

Welcome dear readers to our CESDASIA newsletter, an Asian Perspective. We are thrilled to have you join us on this journey of discovery and inspiration. As you delve into the pages of our publication, we hope you find stories that resonate with you, articles that spark your curiosity, and images that captivate your imagination. Our team has worked tirelessly to bring you a diverse range of content that we believe will enrich your reading experience. Thank you for choosing to explore the world through us.

Having concluded our inaugural summit titled “Building an Asian Common Market of Shared Prosperity” in Kuala Lumpur, we have kicked off our operations to bring together dignitaries, experts, and enthusiasts from across the continent.

The summit included a distinguished panel of speakers and attendees. We are very grateful to those who have come from overseas, from China to India to the Philippines to Indonesia to Singapore, as well as those from Malaysia for the conference. We especially thank YB Senator Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Anifah Aman, Special Advisor to the Chief Minister of Sabah, East Malaysia, and Malaysia’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as Mr. KJ Alphons, India’s former Minister of State for IT, Culture and Tourism and a senior leader of India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, the BJP, his colleague and veteran leader Mr. Seshadri Ramanujan Chari, Mr. Wang Jian, Executive Chairman, Sichuan Provincial International Corporation and Investment Promotion Association, Dr. Yuan Bing, Chairman of China Development and Investment Group Co. Ltd., among other notable scholars for their enlightening speeches and insightful wisdom. I must especially thank my friend Tan Sri Datuk Ong Tee Keat, Malaysia’s former Minister of Transport and Chairman of BRICAP, for consenting to deliver the Valedictory Address.



Kuala Lumpur (CESDASIA, 2024)

We all know the success of ASEAN since its inception in 1967. This shiny example of regional cooperation needs to be replicated and extended to other parts of Asia, including East Asia, and South Asia. Promoting ASEAN and its model is what drove my colleagues and myself to create CESDAsia. Its aim, our aim, is to foster win-win cooperation and to develop economic prosperity. Then, we also want to highlight the post-pandemic recovery and climate change. Uniting ASEAN with East Asia and South Asia can lead to a new age of economic cooperation in building a super common market that lifts the marginalized among its populations to much-improved standards of living.

We chose Malaysia to be our base because of its wide acceptability among nations of the region, and beyond. Its abled articulation of the best principles of ASEAN in regional cooperation serves as a shining example of how a medium-sized nation can contribute to peaceful development and prosperity. The debates at our conference, we believe, will hopefully contribute towards a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that such a common market of solidarity will present us.

Dr. S Sathya Moorthy S Subramaniam

*Chairman,
CESDASIA*



TOWARDS AN ASIAN COMMON MARKET FOR SHARED PROSPERITY PROTECTING THE DEVELOPING WORLD FROM THE DICTATES OF THE WORLD ORDER ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Dr. Seshadri Ramanujan Chari

The tug of war between the developed world and the developing world over issues related to developments funds and climate change mitigation appears to be decades old. The North-South divide was evident when the war-torn West was struggling to put its economy back on the rails post the Second World War. The Bretton Woods Conference established the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). The Bank's first loan was to France and other European countries. The first loan to a non-European country was to Chile in 1948 (13.5 million US dollars for building a hydroelectric power generation plant).

By the 1970s, over 40% of people in developing countries lived in absolute poverty. In response, the World Bank's projects aimed to help the poor directly. World Bank President Robert McNamara coined the term "absolute poverty" in his 1973 Annual Meeting speech, and was the first to communicate the World Bank's twin goals: "...to accelerate economic growth and to reduce poverty." (World Development Report, 1978). These concepts transformed the Bank into the institution focused on development that we know today.

Lending to member countries increased twelve-fold between 1968 and 1981, and expanded into new sectors: environment, rural development, water, sanitation, education, and others. The global effort to eradicate river blindness is one example of how the Bank worked to improve the lives of the poor, which was different from the large infrastructure projects that were done in the Bank's first 20 years. The first loan for the environment was in 1971 for pollution control in Brazil, and the Bank subsequently built environmental safeguards into its process. During the 1970s economists were the primary advisers in the Bank, but staff with different skills in anthropology, sociology, environmental science and other sectors were hired to provide even more expertise to clients.

especially the so-called third world.

In the 1990s, the Bank assisted former Soviet nations to redirect their economies after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and many of these newly sovereign nations became World Bank members. In 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established to further the focus on safeguarding the environment, and in 1996 the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries debt initiative was approved to enable poor countries to focus on sustainable development and reducing poverty. The World Bank added another institution to the group when the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) was formed in 1988 to provide political risk insurance and credit enhancement to investors and lenders.

The developmental assistance programmes emanating from the developed world and targeted at the developing countries was never the same again. Gradually, in the name of safeguards, series of conditionalities were built into the development assistance funds.

When climate change became the buzz world in the global economic narrative, many countries in the 'developed west' looked to shift their production centres elsewhere,



(Press Trust of India, 2019)

This necessitated building strings within the donor-donee relationship and the financial tools. In the last three decades almost all the climate change conferences have witnessed the tug of war between the aid giving developed world and the production centres in the developing world. The attempts to frame global rules by the West to stabilise greenhouse gas levels and force the developing world to sign on the dotted lines were severely criticised in the run up to the Durban conference.

A report published by the World Development Movement enlisted unpublished information about 'arm twisting by the West' at the Copenhagen and Cancun climate conferences in 2009 and 2010. In one section the report criticises threats by richer countries to withdraw funds to help poorer nations cope with climate change if they failed to sign up to the accord. It says: "The US and the UK openly stated that climate finance would be limited to those that signed up to [it]. Ed Miliband, the UK minister, was blunt about linking the funding of developing countries with accepting the accord. The concerns he raised must be noted, he said, 'otherwise we won't operationalise the funds'."

The authors add: "The US said they would deny climate finance to Bolivia and Ecuador because they had objected to the Copenhagen accord proposal. The EU's Connie Hedegaard had also suggested that the small island-state countries "could be 'our best allies because they need finance'." A diplomat from the Polynesian island of Tuvalu is reported to have said at that time, "Can I suggest that it looks like we are being offered 30 pieces of silver to betray our people and our future. Mr President, our future is not for sale." It was even alleged that it almost became a standard practice at the UN climate meetings for rich countries to try to apply the policy of 'divide and rule' for developing countries' negotiating groups. Developing countries at times admitted that they are bamboozled by the tactics and are often unable to keep up with the negotiations.

How to protect the interests of developing world

There is a great sense of awareness among the developing world on the urgent need to cooperate and come to the negotiating table as one block. This of course, is easier said than done.

There is little doubt that post pandemic and in the context of the on-going Russia-Ukraine conflict, the pressure on the present world order is tremendous, to say the least. Now, world order is not an institutionalised structure that it can be altered or changed in a conference or meeting. It is closely related to the emerging dynamics of geopolitics. In a situation where the world is gradually but surely moving towards multilateralism, world order too will be determined by the collective leadership of developing or emerging economies which are also emerging as middle powers.

These middle powers and its collective leadership will have to partner with one another and frame a system to protect its stakeholders and the rest of the world from challenges of climate change and the cartelisation of responses

Dr. Seshadri Ramanujan Chari,

Executive Member,

Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries, Governing Council (India)

IN PURSUIT OF A LONG LOST FAIR DEAL



Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat

At the outset, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the hosts, namely the Centre for Economic and Sustainable Development of Asia, and the Global Dialogue Forum on the foresight in organising such a timely event when the world, notably the developing Global South is in search of a coherent and effective system of global governance. The theme of "Building an Asian Common Market of Shared Prosperity" has aptly navigated us to discourse on such dimensions as "Forging a shared Asian future of economic prosperity", "Use of domestic currencies in trade and investment in Asia" and "Protecting the developing world from the dictates of the world order on climate change and other environmental concerns".

Indeed, all these constitute the key concerns of the day for humanity amid the growing drumbeats of geopolitical conflicts. As the reigning hegemon is reeling from its "anguish of displacement" in the wake of its waning primacy, the world is bifurcated into the West and non-West ideological camps, much to the detriment of international cooperation in the face of multiple existential challenges. The heightening belligerence is edging the world to the brink of catastrophic Armageddon. No amount of political euphemism and semantics could ever conceal the hard reality that the post-WWII global order is now at stake and global governance in disarray. The developing Global South, having had unshackled itself from the past colonialism, is now bearing the full brunt of the multiple existential threats. Many of the Global South countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America remain mired in the quandary of various insecurities.

The Ghost of Conflict

Generally, the Global South is known to be blessed with abundance of resources. Nonetheless large parts of the South remain poor and relatively underdeveloped as resources are still largely in the grip of proxies backed by their past colonial masters. Economic sovereignty remains a distant dream to many of these newly independent states after WWII.

At the same time, neither have they been truly allowed to exercise their desired political sovereignty. By and large, sustainable development is rendered less sustainable. The key pillar initiative of extreme poverty reduction, underscored in the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda, has been facing a noticeable backslide since 2017. The daunting task of controlling the global extreme poverty rate below 3% by 2030 is getting increasingly beyond reach in the wake of such headwinds of exigencies.

The gloomy scenario is evidenced in the "Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020 Report" which reports that more than 40% of the hard core poor is scattered within the war zones. The World Bank report further reveals the sharp rise of abject poverty statistics by two folds in West Asia and Northern Africa in 2015--2018, following the military conflicts in Syria and Yemen which eventuated in humanitarian disasters. Time and again, the mayhem was perpetrated in Asia to serve the selfish geopolitical interest of powers from outside the region. And without fail, the Global South countries were consistently made the targets of aggression under the prevailing order, albeit the rhetoric of "rules-based order" continues to ring aloud.

The Pandemic Test



(Vecteezy, 2022)

The coronavirus outbreak in 2020 witnessed a global health emergency stalling all human activities worldwide. Without exception, it wreaked havoc on global sustainable development. While the developed economies were preoccupied with indiscriminate scrambling for disaster-relief resources themselves, the backslide of poor population was further exacerbated by the contagion. In 2020 alone, the pandemic-induced poverty figure has already alarmingly breached the 88 million mark.

It couldn't be more outrageous than what was cited by the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Winnie Byanyima in a critically-worded article where the People's Vaccine Alliance was quoted as saying "Empty promises will not save the world from Covid-19. World leaders have made big promises, but only 13% of the 1 billion doses promised by the G7 leaders had been delivered as of September 2021." On the other hand, in the case of COVAX implementation, while WHO had only shipped out 68 million doses to the developing world, acutely falling short of its target of 2 billion doses scheduled for 2021, it is no secret that the US had then been hoarding the world's biggest stockpile of surplus COVID-19 vaccines, to the extent of no less than twice its population size.

The Climate Change Throes

Crunch in realizing the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is getting even more acute when the global warming-induced fallout looks set to push up further the poverty figures by 68 million till 2030. The Sub-Saharan region and South Asian countries are identified as the key areas to bear the brunt. Again, the Global South is not spared from the climate change throes.

Be that as it may, the Global South has never ceased to be scapegoated for excessive carbon emission and environmental degradation purportedly caused by their pursuit of economic development through industrialization. Yet, on the other hand, many rich nations remain recalcitrant in not fulfilling their monetary pledge at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-- Conference of the Parties), thus leaving the multilateral international cooperation in addressing climate change in the lurch. Vulnerable nations, notably those from the Global South, are again deprived of the monetary resources needed to mitigate the impacts of climate change where extreme weather has resulted in crop failures and the consequential food insecurity.

Tokenism vs Aspiration

While the world at large upholds the principle of human rights in our global governance, the primordial existential rights of humanity must first be given due priority. The rights to sustainable development in a peaceful environment is particularly significant to the developing Global South which has been pursuing their respective trajectory of nation building and governance. People's aspiration and choices from the South must be accorded with due respect, though at times it may not be consistent with the interests pursued by the West. Their voices and priorities must be duly heard and granted due cognizance in the global governance.

Multipolarity characterised by the emergence of new centres of power is now the dominating paradigm on the world stage. The Global South has every right to not play pawns to any contesting power in the geopolitical rivalry. The dire needs of the Global South in sustainable development and an inclusive global governance under the command of a cohesive United Nations should never be taken for granted and addressed by sheer lip service or tokenism borne out of political expediency.



(Global Times, 2022)

All in all, what the Global South has been yearning for all these years is nothing more than an egalitarian and inclusive international order where their concerns can be addressed even-handedly. After all, both the Global North and South alike have a shared future and intertwined interest on this planet that is home to humanity. Last but not least, credit must be given to all our speakers hailing from near and far for their contribution. It's my sincere wish to see that the host will endeavour to roll out more public discourse initiatives of global relevance and significance in times to come.

Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat

President,

Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific (BRICAP)



Mr. Arin Jira

CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON ASEAN COUNTRIES

Climate change is a pressing global issue that poses significant challenges to countries worldwide. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change due to its geographical location and socio-economic dynamics. This article will explore the current climate change issues facing ASEAN countries and examine their impact on the region.

1. Rising Sea Levels:

One of the most visible consequences of climate change is the rise in sea levels. ASEAN countries, with their long coastlines and numerous low-lying areas, are particularly susceptible to the dangers posed by this phenomenon. Rising sea levels are causing coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and increased vulnerability to storm surges, thereby threatening both human settlements and vital ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs.

2. Extreme Weather Events:

Climate change has resulted in an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, typhoons, and floods. ASEAN countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam, have experienced devastating impacts, including loss of lives, displacement of communities, destruction of infrastructure, and agricultural losses. Continuous exposure to extreme weather events hampers the region's socio-economic development and exacerbates poverty and inequality.

3. Loss of Biodiversity:

ASEAN countries boast rich biodiversity, but climate change jeopardizes this ecological wealth. Rising global temperatures, coupled with deforestation and habitat degradation, are causing the extinction of numerous plant and animal species. This loss of biodiversity has far-reaching consequences, including disruptions to ecosystems, the loss of potential medicinal resources, and a decline in tourism revenues derived from eco-tourism.

4. Food Security:

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in ASEAN economies, and climate change poses significant risks to food security. Changing rainfall patterns, increased droughts, and more frequent heatwaves are impacting crop production and livestock systems. Subsistence farmers, in particular, are facing challenges in adapting to these changes, potentially leading to increased food insecurity and malnutrition in the region.

5. Water Scarcity:

Climate change exacerbates water scarcity issues in ASEAN countries. Disruptions to rainfall patterns and shrinking water sources due to rising temperatures result in reduced water availability for domestic, agricultural, and industrial use. This water scarcity can lead to conflicts over water resources, affect public health, and hamper economic growth. Singapore and parts of Thailand are already grappling with water scarcity, requiring them to invest in innovative solutions such as desalination and water recycling.



(World Economic Forum 2014)

6. Migration and Displacement:

Climate-induced changes, including rising sea levels and extreme weather events, often lead to population displacement and migration. ASEAN countries are witnessing internal and cross-border migration due to climate-related reasons, putting additional strains on social and economic systems. The movement of people can fuel social tensions, place pressure on urban infrastructure, and strain government resources.

Asean countries can mitigate climate change impact by employing the following strategies. And to ensure sustainable and economic growth in the face of climate change impact, ASEAN countries need to adopt proactive and comprehensive measures. The region has shown commitment to addressing climate change through initiatives like the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution and the ASEAN Framework on Climate Change.

The following key strategies are recommended for implementation to help ASEAN countries cope with the challenges posed by climate change.

1. Strengthening Climate Resilience:

ASEAN countries must prioritize building climate resilience within their national policies and development plans. This involves investing in infrastructure that can withstand extreme weather events, implementing early warning systems, and developing climate-resilient agriculture practices. Enhancing the region's capacity to adapt to climate change will reduce vulnerabilities and ensure the continuity of economic activities.

2. Promoting Renewable Energy:

Transitioning to a low-carbon economy is crucial for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the impact of climate change. ASEAN countries should incentivize and invest in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower. This will not only reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lower carbon emissions but also create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth in the clean energy sector.

3. Sustainable Land Management:

Integrating sustainable land management practices is essential for preserving ecosystems and conserving biodiversity. ASEAN countries should prioritize reforestation efforts, promoting sustainable agriculture techniques, and implementing land-use planning that balances economic growth with environmental conservation. These measures will not only sequester carbon dioxide but also protect watersheds, maintain soil fertility, and preserve vital habitats.

4. Enhancing Water Management:

Given the water scarcity and drought risks posed by climate change, ASEAN countries should prioritize water management strategies. This includes investing in water storage and irrigation systems, promoting water conservation measures at the individual and industrial levels, and adopting wastewater treatment technologies. Efficient water management will enhance agricultural productivity, reduce conflicts over water resources, and safeguard public health.

5. Strengthening Regional Collaboration:

ASEAN should strengthen regional cooperation to effectively address climate change challenges. This can be achieved through sharing best practices, exchanging technical expertise, and establishing regional platforms for collaborative research and innovation. Joint efforts in capacity building and knowledge sharing will enable member states to learn from each other's experiences and create a unified approach to deal with the impacts of climate change.

6. Empowering Local Communities:

Engaging and empowering local communities, including indigenous groups and small-scale farmers, is crucial for climate change adaptation and mitigation. ASEAN countries should involve these communities in decision-making processes, provide them with the necessary resources and technology, and support their efforts in implementing sustainable practices. Local knowledge and participation are invaluable in developing context-specific strategies tailored to the unique challenges faced by each region.



(Eye on Asia, 2023)

Conclusion:

In summary, climate change issues pose significant challenges for Asean, threatening their economies, ecosystems, and human well-being. Coping with climate change impact requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. ASEAN countries need to prioritize climate resilience, promote renewable energy, adopt adaptive and sustainable land management practices, enhance water management, strengthen regional collaboration, and empower local communities. By implementing these measures, ASEAN countries can ensure sustainable and economic growth while mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. It is crucial for governments, policymakers, businesses, and civil society to work together in a collaborative and coordinated manner and only through concerted efforts and shared responsibility can Asean navigate these challenges and create a climate resilient environment for their citizens, thereby securing a sustainable future for the region.

Mr. Arin Jira

Vice Chairman

The Federation of Thai Industries

INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP- CRITICAL PLANK OF FOREIGN POLICY



Amb. Rahul Chhabra IFS

India has been widely and willingly sharing with other countries of the Global South its developmental experiences and technical expertise, despite its own massive resource constraints. This spirit of "VasudhaivaKutumbakam" is explained in the words of Gandiji, who said, "I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service to India includes the service of humanity."

Background: Launched in 1964, one of the oldest institutionalised arrangements for international capacity building, The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme is Government of India's leading capacity building platform. More than 2,00,000 officials from over 160 countries have benefitted. This programme has gradually expanded to now include several instruments.

Instruments:

a) Grant-in-aid: A few examples of iconic projects are Friendship Dam and Parliament Building (Afghanistan), ENT Hospital, Metro Express Project and Supreme Court Building (Mauritius), Jaffna Cultural Center (Sri Lanka).

Currently under implementation are US \$ 4 billion covering sectors such as infrastructure, hydroelectricity, power transmission, agriculture, education, health, industry in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Seychelles. Projects in sectors such as ICT, SME and archaeological conservation have been undertaken in South East Asia, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America.

b) Concessional Lines of Credit (LoC) announced are over US \$ 22 bn during the last 10 years. In total, over 300 LoCs worth over US \$ 30 billion have been extended to 65 countries. 322 LoC projects have been completed (277 projects are under implementation) in critical infrastructure sectors such as power generation and distribution; agriculture and irrigation; transport connectivity through railways, roads and ports; manufacturing industries, healthcare, education and capacity building.

Over US \$ 16 billion have been extended to Asian countries, with the largest commitments in the immediate neighbourhood. In addition to LoCs that have been extended in new sectors like Defence and Solar energy, Iconic infrastructure projects completed include Parliament Building (Gambia), Presidential Palace (Ghana), Kosi Power Project (providing ⅓ rd of Sudan's power), Nyaborongo Project (providing ¼ th of Rwanda's power), Upper Ruvu Treatment Plant (clean drinking water to more than 2 million in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania), first Oil Refinery (Mongolia), first Cement plant (Djibouti), first Milk Processing plant (Mauritania), first Sugar factory (Ghana).



Presidential Palace of Ghana (Wikipedia, 2010)

c) Capacity Building involving scholarships to over 1,40,000 over the last 10 years. Countries from Asia, Africa, East Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean as well as Pacific & Small Island countries have benefitted. Approximately 15,000 slots (including defence training) offered in nearly 400 courses in around 100 institutions in areas as diverse as Engineering & Technology; Government Functions; Environment & Climate change; Agriculture; Banking, Finance, Accounts & Audit; English Language; Health & Yoga; Petroleum; ICT; Journalism; Management & Leadership; Power, Renewable & Alternate Energy, including Solar; Rural Development; and Women Empowerment. Recent modalities include e-ITEC (gained tremendous popularity during the pandemic), ITEC-on-site and ITEC executive.

d) Technical Assistance including training on-site abroad, deputation of Indian experts, establishment of centres of excellence in IT and vocational training centres.

Fields Impacted:

Depending on the priorities of the recipient countries, they cover an extensive range across the economy and society, including a) Commerce; b) Culture; c) Energy; d) Engineering; e) Health; f) Housing; g) IT; h) Infrastructure; i) Sports; j) Science; k) Disaster relief and humanitarian assistance; l) Restoration and preservation of cultural and heritage assets

Case Study: Capacity Building Programme for Maldivian Civil Servants

Despite current frictions, Maldives has sought renewal of the 2019 MoU to train 1000 bureaucrats in India, over the next 5 years. The final 30th training programme, with 40 Maldivian Civil servants visiting India this month will bring the total to 1,005 officials. The above included customised training programmes for officials from the Anti-Corruption Commission & Information Commission. The programme encompasses sharing of Indian learning from its schemes & projects such as e-governance, digital India, universalisation of public services, approaches to sustainable development goals, public grievance redressal mechanism and disaster management with special reference to coastal regions. The frosty relationship has not deterred the Maldivian government from seeking a renewal on the same terms & conditions. Over 2,200 in-person trainings have been held since 2019.

Benefits:

Countries of the Global South have seen their populations skilled & trained. Their physical infrastructure has been upgraded, including in several cases, their manufacturing capacities. Many of them were bailed out during natural disasters. The developmental objectives of beneficiary countries have been advanced to a large extent. All of the above has been at virtually minimal cost with appropriate technologies, in a sustainable manner. Indian corporates have been able to showcase their capabilities, technical prowess and products; thus enabling them to enter hitherto virgin markets. Local populations have been exposed to India, during their training visits, or/and from the grants/Lines of Credit availed. LoCs have a special focus on regional connectivity initiatives in the neighbourhood as these can act as force multipliers to accelerate regional growth and development, promote people-to-people contact, and encourage trade and commerce.

Conclusion:

India's strategy is best summed up in the words of PM Modi in his address to the Ugandan Parliament (July 2018); "Our development partnership will be guided by your priorities. It will be on terms that will be comfortable for you, that will liberate your potential and not constrain your future.....We will build as much local capacity and create as many local opportunities as possible". As India's geopolitical and geoeconomic heft rises, this little known plank of its foreign policy will gain further importance; it will be of interest to observe how strategically India is able to manoeuvre and utilise this dimension of its soft and hard power.

Amb. Rahul Chhabra IFS

Former Ambassador of India to Hungary, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Somalia

Government of India



Dr. Yuan Bing

CHINA'S VISION FOR GLOBAL HARMONY: A COMMITMENT TO PEACE, DEVELOPMENT, AND COOPERATION IN ASIA

Asia is by far one of the world's most dynamic and promising regions. As a member of the Asian family and a responsible country in the international community, China has always been a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, and a defender of international order. China is committed to building a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for mankind. Chinese governments, social organizations, and enterprises are all willing to actively participate in the process of promoting friendship and shared prosperity between China and the rest world.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is a regional grouping, that is of great importance to promote the cooperation and integrated development in the Asian region. ASEAN engages in a wide range of areas, such as economy, politics, security, military, diplomacy, trade, investment, and strategic channels and plays a significant role. Today, in the era of global strategic competition, ASEAN has become a "vantage point" in the multilateral system. The establishment of China-ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partnership has given impetus to the regional and global peace, prosperity, and development.

Looking at the world, sustainable development of economy and environment represents the greatest convergence of interests and the best point of cooperation among all parties. China Development and Investment Group Co., Ltd. and the Global Forest Products Green Supply Chain (Macau) Federation have always been committed to think tank cooperation, international advanced technology, international production capacity, and investment and cooperation in the field of green finance. It's our unshakable mission to actively explore and practice new forms of international cooperation mechanisms, shape a win-win cooperation, and build a new type of international relations.

Regarding the practices of exploring cooperation for shared prosperity in Asia, I would like to share with you some of the work we are currently doing:

First, we are dedicated to building an open Asian think tank cooperation and dialogue platform, gathering think tank forces from across Asia, and creating an Asian think tank cooperation network for dialogue, exchange, and knowledge sharing. We will strengthen dialogue and consensus on important issues for Asian development and stability, providing inexhaustible intellectual impetus for the progress of Asia.



(Blackred, 2020)

Second, the full entry into force of RCEP demonstrates the commitments of the 15 signatory countries to open markets for goods, services, and investments, combined with high-level rules in various fields. RCEP will greatly promote the free flow of production factors, such as raw materials, products, technologies, talents, capital, information, and data in the region, and gradually form a more prosperous integrated regional market, facilitating broader, higher-level, and deeper open cooperation among member countries. We believe that the continued promotion of the high-quality implementation of RCEP will contribute to the deep integration and development of regional industrial and supply chains, expand new space for localities, industries, and enterprises in international economic and trade cooperation, and promote higher-level institutional openness from a higher starting point. In the future, RCEP will become a more important driving force for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region and a significant source of global economic growth.

Third, finance is the core of modern economy, and green finance is one of the best solutions to achieve harmonious development between the economy and the environment.

Practice has proven that green finance can promote technological innovation and accelerate the optimization and adjustment of industrial structure. Cooperation needs to focus on the following aspects: First, promoting the coordination of global and regional green finance standards, reducing the cost of cross-border investment and financing, and promoting further development of the international green capital market; Second, expanding green finance cooperation within existing cooperative mechanisms, such as the G20 framework and China-ASEAN cooperation mechanism; Third, strengthening capacity building of global green finance. While countries strengthen their own capacity building, they may support and participate in the collective improvement of global green capacity, strengthen talent training, exchanges, and cooperation at all levels, and share development experiences, laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of global green finance.

ASEAN is China's largest trading partner in forest products, with strong complementarity and cooperation potential in the trade of forest products between the two sides. In 2022, the total trade volume of forest products between China and the 10 ASEAN countries reached 54.1 billion US dollars, an increase of 6.4% compared to the previous year, accounting for 28.3% of China's total trade volume of forest products. In the first quarter of this year, the total trade volume of forest products between China and the ASEAN region reached 11.9 billion US dollars, a year-on-year increase of 9.0%, with a faster growth rate than last year.

As the main part and important resource of the terrestrial ecosystem, the forest provides multiple benefits such as ecological, social and economic benefits and acts as the material basis for the development of the forest industry. The forest industry is a special industry, Firstly, its raw materials are renewable. Secondly, during the growth process of forests, they absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. Therefore, the forest industry has irreplaceable functions in climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, increasing employment in developing countries, and eliminating poverty. It is a livelihood industry that benefits the people and promotes prosperity. We attach great importance to the precious value of the forestry industry mentioned above. Under the guidance of the concept of sustainable development, we are willing to work together with ASEAN countries to jointly build global green supply chains of forest products. For example, by introducing high-tech technologies such as block-chain traceability and artificial intelligence, and introducing incentive measures such as green finance, we will promote the integrated development of the ASEAN forestry industry chain, supply chain, and value chain, and jointly promote the prosperity and development of the forest products market. We hope to enhance cooperation in the following areas: using technologies such as blockchain and big data to trace the source of forest products, and according to relevant standards, providing a "Green Passage" for the import and export of legal and sustainable forest products, thereby offering a broader market for legal and sustainable forest products;

strengthening bilateral investments in forestry, utilizing advanced technologies and equipment such as industrial robots, CNC machinery, and smart distribution to promote the digital transformation of the forestry industry, drive efficient utilization of timber, increase added-value of products, and improve enterprise management efficiency; Third, increasing multilateral and bilateral cooperation in green finance to support the development of forest products, improving the regulatory framework for green finance in the forest products sector, enhancing green finance incentives, collectively selecting a batch of sustainable forest product projects to give support, reducing the cost for the private sector (especially small and medium-sized forestry enterprises) to engage in sustainable operations, and encouraging the private sector to assume social and environmental responsibilities and practice sustainable development. Fourth, deepening international forestry cooperation, and increasing collaboration and exchanges with the private sector of forestry in ASEAN through high-level forums, professional exhibitions, B2B activities, technical exchanges, and talent development. Currently, the Global Green Supply Chain of Forest Products (Macau) Federation has already cooperated with associations and companies in some ASEAN countries.



Port Economics, Management and Policy (2022)

In the future, the Federation will provide more comprehensive services and we welcome more representatives from the forestry industry of ASEAN countries to join. We wish to work with all insightful individuals both from Asia and the world, in a spirit of sincerity, cooperation, equality, and mutual benefit, and move together in unity to achieve tangible results and to promote the common prosperity of the Asian market.

Dr. Yuan Bing,

Consulting Fellow of the International Cooperation Center,

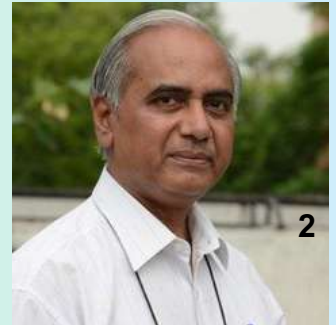
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About CESDAsia

Centre for Economic and Sustainable Development (CESDAsia) is a think tank that concentrates on the studies of economic affairs, sustainable development, public policies, and geopolitical matters in the Asian region. The main areas of focus are South-East, East, West, Central, and South Asia.

We intend to serve as a bridge to enhance connectivity among nations. CESDAsia is located in the heart of ASEAN, which is a connecting hub for major Asian economies such as China, India, Japan, South Korea, etc.

We will have a point of operation from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. As a friendly nation that is a multiracial society, Malaysia facilitates as the conduit for all member nations to attend, visit, and dialogue to improve trade and investment ties, sustainable goals, and inter-government relations.

We invite you all to join us on our journey to bringing Asia together through a broader perspective. You may follow us on our website, and LinkedIn for further updates. Please click the icons below for links. I hope to be in contact with you soon.

With best regards,

Dr. S Sathya Moorthy S Subramaniam
Chairman, CESDAsia



PAST EVENTS

1) KL CONFERENCE, 2023



(CESDASIA, 2023)

Date: Saturday 17th June, 2023

Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Venue: Royale Chulan Hotel

CESDAsia hosted its inaugural Economic Conference on June 17th, 2023 at the Royale Chulan Hotel in Kuala Lumpur city.

The event was co-hosted by our partner organization, The Global Dialogue Forum.

The speakers at this event included YB Senator Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Anifah Aman, Tan Sri Ong Tee Keat, Dr. Peng Yang, Ambassador Rahul Chhabra, Mr. K. J. Alphons, Mr. Sathya Moorthy, Mr. Moses Manoharan, and many more dignitaries.

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