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ASEAN Law Conference 2026

Concept Notes

Session 1: Enforcement and Challenge of Arbitral Awards Across ASEAN: Convergence, Divergence, and Judicial Trends

This session will examine how courts across ASEAN approach the recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards under the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (the New York Convention).

Objective:

To provide a realistic enforcement risk map of ASEAN, identifying strengths, emerging jurisprudential trends, and cautionary areas for users of arbitration.

Key Themes:

- Comparative judicial trends across ASEAN jurisdictions
- Grounds for refusal: public policy, due process, arbitrability
- Pro-enforcement bias: reality or rhetoric?
- Consistency vs fragmentation in court approaches
- The role of apex courts in shaping arbitration-friendly jurisprudence

Speakers:

- Representative from the Judiciary of Singapore (TBC)
- Representative from the Judiciary of Malaysia (TBC)
- Kamonchanok Katinasmit
Judge, the Court of Justice, Thailand
Executive Director, Thai Arbitration Institute
- Arbitration Practitioner from Vietnam

Moderator:

- Assistant Professor Andre C. Palacios
Executive Director, ASEAN Law Institute

Session 2: Investor Perspectives on ASEAN-seated Arbitration: Transparency, Neutrality, Predictability, and Trust

As ASEAN continues to position itself as a preferred destination for foreign investment, the credibility of its dispute resolution mechanisms has become a critical consideration for investors. This session explores how foreign investors—particularly from key economies such as China and Japan—perceive ASEAN-seated arbitration. It examines whether ASEAN jurisdictions are viewed as transparent, neutral, and predictable forums, and whether they inspire sufficient trust compared to more established arbitration seats outside the region. Bringing together corporate counsel, representatives of the outbound investment community, and arbitration practitioners (including those with experience as arbitrators), the discussion will provide a practical, experience-based perspective on how dispute resolution choices are made in real investment contexts.

Key Themes:

- Investor Priorities in Dispute Resolution
 - What foreign investors look for when structuring dispute resolution clauses
- Host State vs Neutral Seat
 - Factors influencing the choice between arbitration in the host State and established foreign seats (e.g., perceived neutrality, judicial support, political risk).
- Transparency Predictability, and Trust
 - Concerns relating to consistency of court decisions, procedural certainty, clarity of arbitration frameworks in ASEAN jurisdictions, and overall confidence in legal institutions.
- Practical Realities of Arbitration
 - Insights from arbitration practitioners and arbitrators on how ASEAN-seated proceedings actually unfold compared to non-ASEAN seats.
- Voices from the Market
 - Perspectives from corporate lawyers advising foreign investors, as well as representatives from foreign investor community.

Speakers:

- Corporate Lawyer (China practice) (TBC)
- Corporate Lawyer (Japan practice) (TBC)
- Representative, Chinese Outbound Investment Community (TBC)
- Counsel/Arbitrator (TBC)

Moderator:

- Counsel/Arbitrator (TBC)

Session 3: The Future of ASEAN Arbitration: Harmonisation, Innovation, and Regional Competitiveness

This session examines the future of arbitration in ASEAN through the lens of legal harmonisation and technological transformation. It explores the potential for greater alignment of arbitration laws—drawing on frameworks such as the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration—to enhance predictability and efficiency across the region, while also assessing how emerging technologies, including AI and digital proceedings, are reshaping arbitral practice. The discussion will further address the practical challenges faced by both established and emerging arbitral institutions in adapting to evolving user expectations and maintaining credibility in a rapidly changing dispute resolution landscape.

Key Themes:

- Legal Harmonisation and Convergence
 - Alignment of national arbitration laws with international standards (e.g., UNCITRAL Model Law)
 - Benefits and limits of harmonisation within ASEAN’s diverse legal systems.
 - Impact on predictability, enforceability, and transaction costs.
- Technology and the Future of Arbitration
 - Use of AI in case management, document review, and decision-support.
 - Growth of online and hybrid hearings.
 - Cybersecurity, data protection, and digital evidence in cross-border disputes.
- Institutional Challenges and Adaptation
 - Pressures on established arbitral institutions to innovate and remain efficient and barriers faced by emerging institutions in building credibility and user trust.
 - Ensuring consistency, enforceability, and procedural integrity.
 - The role of institutions in shaping best practices and procedural innovation.

Speakers/Moderator:

- Dato’ Mary Lim Thiam Suan
President of the AIAC Court of Arbitration, Malaysia
- Representative, School of International Arbitration (TBC)
- Representative, UNCITRAL (TBC)
- Representative, Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) (TBC)
- Legal Academic (TBC)
- International Arbitrator (TBC)
- Representative, Thai Arbitration Institute

Session 4: Law & Gender Equality–The Glass Ceiling and the Digital Wall: Navigating the New Frontier of Gender Equality in Southeast Asia

This panel discussion explores the next frontier of gender equality in ASEAN. Despite significant progress in formal legal frameworks, gender equality outcomes across Southeast Asia remain uneven, highlighting a persistent gap between law on the books and law in practice. The panel focuses on a number of interlinked challenges: ineffective enforcement of existing labour and anti-discrimination laws, the legal invisibility of unpaid care work and its impact on women’s economic participation, the rapid rise of online gender-based violence and cross-border digital abuse, and tensions between civil law and customary or religious legal systems affecting women’s rights. The session aims to advance the discussion from formal equality to substantive justice by identifying practical legal reforms and regional approaches that ensure gender equality is meaningfully realised across ASEAN.

Objectives:

1. To identify specific procedural hurdles in national penal and labor codes that prevent women from successfully litigating for equal pay or against workplace harassment.
2. To debate the institutionalisation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Care Economy (2025) by proposing model national legislation that treats “care” as a strategic public good rather than a private female obligation.
3. To explore ideas for drafting the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children and Women from Online Violence, specifically focusing on platform accountability and regional “takedown” protocols.
4. To explore “legal pluralism” strategies that uphold CEDAW standards while respecting cultural contexts, ensuring that women’s rights to land and resources are not overridden by local tradition.

Speakers:

- Representative, UN Women (TBC)
- Representative, the Malaysian Bar (TBC)
- Dr Bhanubhatra Jittiang, Representative of Thailand to the AICHR (TBC)

Moderator:

- Dr Supakit Yampracha
Doctor of Laws Program Director, Pridi Banomyong Faculty of Law, Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand

Session 5: Law & Environment—Adapting to Net Zero: ASEAN Responses to Emerging Carbon Regulatory Frameworks

This session examines the role of law and governance in addressing climate change in ASEAN, focusing on how national legal frameworks and policy instruments support both adaptation and mitigation efforts while aligning with international commitments such as the Paris Agreement. Bringing together policymakers and private sector representatives, the session highlights the interaction between public regulation and corporate practice in shaping sustainable and low-carbon development pathways in the region. Through country perspectives from Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia, alongside insights from the private sector, the discussion explores emerging climate legislation, regulatory compliance, and responses to cross-border mechanisms such as carbon pricing and trade-related climate measures. The session aims to facilitate regional knowledge-sharing, identify opportunities for cooperation and harmonisation in climate law and governance, and promote constructive dialogue between governments and businesses on legal frameworks, innovation, and implementation challenges in responding to climate change across ASEAN.

Objectives:

1. To facilitate knowledge-sharing on legal and policy approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation across ASEAN.
2. To highlight the role of the private sector in complementing national climate commitments and international obligations.
3. To identify opportunities for harmonization, cooperation, and mutual learning among ASEAN countries on climate law and governance.
4. To foster dialogue between policymakers and corporate actors on regulatory frameworks, compliance, and innovation.

Speakers:

- Dr Phirun Saiyasitpanich
Director-General, Department of Climate Change and Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand
- Chief Sustainability Officer, Sustainability Office, Siam Cement Group
- Representative from Vietnam (Regulator/Policy-maker) (TBC)
- Representative from Indonesia (Regulator/Policy-maker) (TBC)

Moderator:

- Dr Parichart Munsgool
Head of Legal and Head of Sustainability Carabao Tawandang Co., Ltd.

Session 6: Law & Business—Responsible Business Conduct in ASEAN: From Voluntary Standards to Legal Accountability

This panel examines the shift from voluntary corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks to more structured legal and regulatory obligations, including Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards and emerging duties of human rights due diligence. It will also consider this transition in the context of cross-border supply chains and the digital economy, including emerging tools such as digital identity, while addressing its effects on traditional legal concepts—particularly the movement from voluntary responsibility to enforceable legal obligation, and the evolving foundations of corporate accountability.

Objectives:

1. To examine the legal evolution of Responsible Business Conduct in ASEAN from voluntary corporate responsibility to binding legal and regulatory duties.
2. To analyse the implications of this shift for private enterprises operating within and across ASEAN Member States, including emerging compliance expectations and legal risks.
3. To explore the interaction between international norms, regional dynamics, and domestic legal developments, and their collective impact on RBC governance in ASEAN.
4. To consider the supportive role of Digital Identity as a legal and governance tool in strengthening compliance, reporting, and accountability mechanisms within cross-border supply chains.
5. To identify future legal and regulatory trajectories for RBC in ASEAN, with a view to balancing rights protection, effective enforcement, and economic competitiveness.

Speakers:

- Dr Harpreet Kaur
*Portfolio Manager, Business and Human Rights
UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific*
- Ms Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom
*Director of International Human Rights Division, Rights and Liberties Protection
Department, Ministry of Justice, Thailand*
- Representative from the Business Sector (Indonesia) (TBC)
- Legal Academic (Singapore) (TBC)

Moderator:

- Ms Tanyakan Daengsubha
*Justice Officer (Professional Level), Rights and Liberties Protection Department,
Ministry of Justice, Thailand*

Session 7: Law & Tech– Regulating the Use of Generative AI in Court Submissions: Judicial Responses Across Jurisdictions

As Generative AI tools become integral to modern legal practice, courts are increasingly confronted with submissions—including pleadings and motions—drafted with the assistance of artificial intelligence. While these technologies offer the potential to enhance efficiency and access to justice, they also introduce significant risks to procedural integrity, such as hallucinated authorities, fabricated citations, and misgrounded legal analysis. This session provides a comparative analysis of how different judiciaries are responding to these challenges. Rather than pursuing purely restrictive measures, the panel explores balanced regulatory approaches—including disclosure mandates, human-in-the-loop certifications, and updated professional conduct standards—to ensure that the modernisation of legal practice does not compromise the accuracy, accountability, and trust essential to the adjudicative process

Objectives:

1. To conduct a comparative review of judicial orders and guidelines across jurisdictions regarding the mandatory disclosure of AI-assisted legal drafting.
2. To define standards for meaningful human oversight and the certification of accuracy to prevent the entry of fabricated citations into the court record.
3. To evaluate the evolution of professional responsibility and ethical duties for legal practitioners in the age of Generative AI.
4. To identify best practice frameworks that balance the benefits of technological innovation with the need to safeguard the integrity of judicial decision-making.
5. To promote regional dialogue among ASEAN judiciaries and legal professionals on harmonising the digital justice ecosystem in response to emerging AI risks.

Speakers:

- Dr Peerapat Chokesuwattanaskul
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
- Representative from the Judiciary of Singapore (TBC)
- Representative from the Judiciary of Malaysia (TBC)
- Representative from the Judiciary of the Philippines (TBC)

Moderator:

- Judge Dr Kraiphon Aranyarat
The Court of Justice, Thailand

Session 8 (Final Session): Law & Education –Reimagining Legal Education in ASEAN: Innovation, Inclusion, and Impact

This panel focuses on redefining legal education in ASEAN in response to rapid technological change, deeper regional integration, and evolving professional and ethical expectations. It addresses how digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and legal technology are reshaping legal pedagogy, curricula, and professional training, while also raising new questions about ethics, professionalism, and the skills required for cross-border legal practice. The discussion highlights the growing need for greater regional coherence in legal education, including pathways toward mutual recognition of law degrees and qualifications amid persistent differences in accreditation and training systems. It also emphasises the expanding societal role of law schools in promoting access to justice, experiential learning, and community engagement, with a view to developing socially responsible and practice-ready graduates. Through dialogue among stakeholders, the panel seeks to advance innovative, inclusive, and regionally aligned approaches to legal education that strengthen both professional competence and social impact across ASEAN.

Objectives:

1. To explore innovative approaches to legal education in response to digital transformation and legal technology.
2. To examine how ethics and professionalism can be effectively taught in technologically driven and cross-border legal environments.
3. To discuss pathways toward mutual recognition of law degrees and legal qualifications within ASEAN.
4. To highlight the role of experiential learning and community engagement in developing socially responsible and practice-ready legal professionals.
5. To foster regional dialogue and collaboration among ASEAN legal education stakeholders.

Speakers:

- Assistant Professor Dr Arm Tungnirun
Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
- Representative from Indonesia (TBC)
- Representative from Malaysia (TBC)
- Representative from Singapore (TBC)

Moderator:

- Judge Dr Kanok Jullamon
The Court of Justice, Thailand