

Advancing Alternative Regionalism From Below

People and Planet First

**4th Conference on Alternatives
in Southeast Asia**

30–31 October 2023
University Hotel
University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City
Metro Manila, Philippines



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR
INTEGRATIVE AND
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ALTERNATIVES

Advancing Alternative Regionalism From Below

People and Planet First

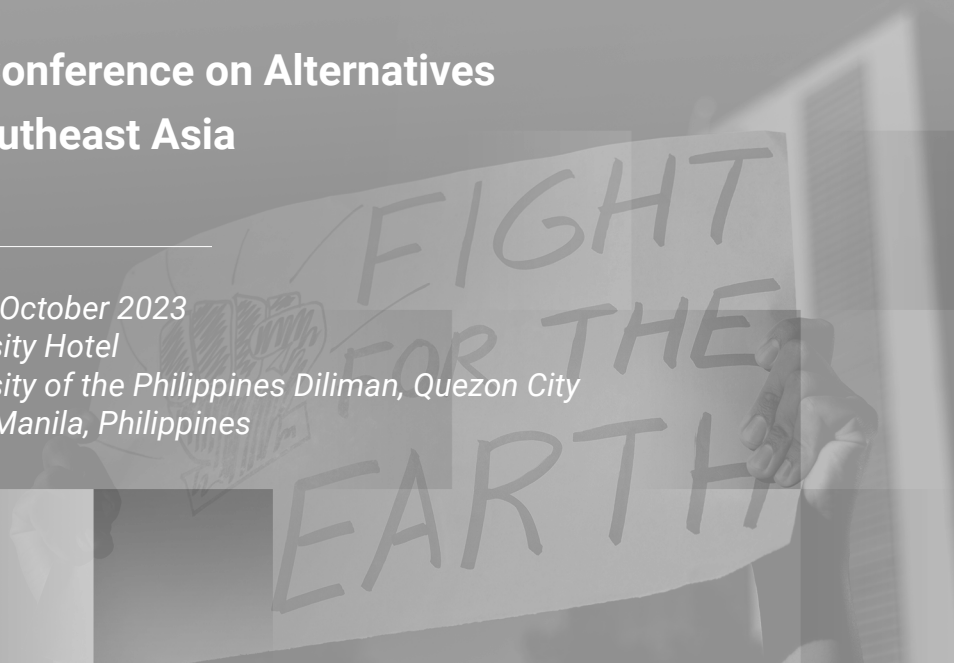
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UP CIDS | PROCEEDINGS

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ABOUT THE PROCEEDINGS

These are the proceedings of the Fourth Conference on Alternatives in Southeast Asia titled “Advancing Alternative Regionalism from Below: People and Planet First.” The conference took place on 30 and 31 October 2023 at the University Hotel, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City. The event was collectively initiated by the Movement for Alternatives and Solidarity in Southeast Asia (MASSA), an emergent movement comprising grassroots and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the region. It was hosted by its interim secretariat, the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) Program on Alternative Development (AltDev).

The two-day conference had two primary objectives: (1) to discuss and debate current and emerging issues confronting marginalized peoples in Southeast Asia; and (2) to define the strategic direction of MASSA and its movement-building efforts. Through this conference, MASSA hopes to solidify people-led regionalism that bolsters cross-national collaboration, regional cooperation, and cross-bordersolidarity between and among the region’s marginalized and excluded peoples.

Proceedings prepared by: Eunice B. Santiago, Dania G. Reyes, and Melanie P. Gan.

Day One

30 October 2023

Opening Ceremonies

- **Assistant Professor Jose Monfred C. Sy**
Project Leader, Program on Alternative Development
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies
- **Yuli Riswati**
Kabar Bumi

Assistant Professor Jose Monfred C. Sy and Yuli Riswati, serving as the masters of ceremonies, formally commenced the Fourth Regional Conference on Southeast Asia Alternatives titled “Advancing Alternative Regionalism from Below: People and Planet First.” The conference theme is a response to the structure and practices of ASEAN, which predominantly prioritize the interests of the political and economic elites within the region.



- Yuli Riswati of Kabar Bumi and Jose Monfred Sy of UP CIDS AltDev, opening the program for Day 1.



- Kontra-GaPi performing for the cultural opening.

For the cultural opening, Kontemporaryong Gamelang Pilipino (Kontra-GaPi), an ethnic music and dance troupe inspired by the diverse ancient artistic cultural heritage of the Philippines, made a captivating performance for the Fourth Regional Conference on Southeast Asia Alternatives.

Welcoming Remarks

- **Dr. Leo Cubillan**
Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of the Philippines

Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Leo Cubillan extended his warm welcome to the participants of the conference. He emphasized the crucial role of civil society groups and their advocacy in national development. He pointed out that civil society groups have a vital role in monitoring government actions, shaping policies, and providing essential services to the people.

Building on this, Dr. Cubillan expressed the significance of the emerging concept of “alternative regionalism” within civil society. This alternative approach challenges the traditional top-down dynamics of regionalism, aiming for a more people-centric model.



■ Dr. Cubillan delivering his welcoming remarks to the conference's participants.

The University of the Philippines (UP), through UP CIDS and the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR) Center for Labor and Grassroots Initiatives, backed MASSA's initiatives in forging an alternative framework for regional solidarity. The university underscored its dedication in offering scholarly and technical support to civil society, emphasizing the provision of well-informed policy recommendations, community engagement, empowerment, capacity-building, and the advancement of advocacies.

Dr. Cubillan also emphasized the integrative nature of the conference, addressing not only economic and political dimensions but also the role of understanding and addressing environmental concerns for promoting equity and social justice. He hoped that the conference would strengthen MASSA's efforts in people-to-people regional collaboration, rooted in the interests and needs of marginalized communities.

4th MASSA Conference Participants



- Participants cheering for their organizations upon being introduced by the masters of ceremonies, Asst. Prof. Sy and Riswati.

Below is the list of organizations that made its appearance at the 4th Regional Conference:

1. University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) Program on Alternative Development (AltDev)
2. ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC)
3. ASEAN Music for Peoples' Peace and Progress (aMP3)
4. Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)
5. Focus on the Global South
6. HomeNet Southeast Asia
7. HomeNet Philippines
8. Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI)
9. Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI)
10. Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP)

11. Solidarity for People's Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL)
12. University of the Philippines School of Labor and Industrial Relations Center for Labor and Grassroots Initiatives (UP SOLAIR)
13. Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation (VPDF)
14. Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA)
15. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
16. Australian People For Health Education & Development Abroad-Timor-Leste (APHEDA)
17. Kabar Bumi
18. Climate Watch Thailand (CWT)
19. Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)
20. Uniaun Agrikultores Ermera (UNAER)
21. TriMona Multi-purpose Cooperative
22. Peoples' Global Exchange (PGX)
23. Good Food Community
24. WomanHealth
25. Inclusive Cities Advocacy Network (ICAN)
26. Stop the War Coalition
27. Vikalp Sangam
28. 11.11.11. Coalition for International Solidarity
29. Pemangkin Research

Keynote Address: Why Alternative Regionalism?

- **Dr. Benjamin Quiñones, Jr.**
Founder, Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)

Dr. Benjamin Quiñones, Jr., representing the Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC), delivered the keynote address. He focused on the two central themes of the conference. The first theme aimed to clarify the primary issue affecting marginalized communities in Southeast Asia. In particular, this pertains to the current neoliberal political-economic system that marginalizes and excludes the majority from development. Likewise, this explains the lack of action of ASEAN member-states on the recommendations of CSOs over the past eighteen years.

Building on the works of the Australian political economist Kelly Gerard and Malaysian political scientist Helen Nesadurai, Dr. Quiñones illustrated the idea that CSOs, engaged in ASEAN fora, are directed towards legitimizing ASEAN's reform agenda rather than challenging it. The preference for large infrastructure projects benefiting multinational companies further deepens the disconnect between the elite-driven ASEAN agenda and the needs of the people.



- Dr. Quinones sharing his keynote address on 'Why Alternative Regionalism?'

Proceeding to the second theme, Dr. Quiñones explored the strategic direction of movement-building toward an alternative regional integration. He outlined the strategic tasks that an alternative regional network (ARN) should undertake. These tasks include promoting values of solidarity and cooperation, documenting people's organizations as vehicles for transformative alternatives, quantifying the impact of alternative practices, monitoring and evaluating the process, organizing convergence between innovators and resource providers, and operating an Alternative Practices Development Roadmap (APDR).

He proposed six pro-people values and principles for alternative regionalism:

1. The Primacy of People and Planet Over Capital and Profit

Alternative regionalism will not prosper when the stakeholders' prioritize capital and profit over the well-being of people and the environment in their concept and agenda for development. The motivation to maximize profit and grow capital is the cornerstone of the neoliberal political and economic system. It is the foundation on which ASEAN was established. Transnational corporations have bounded nation-states to this profit-oriented development agenda through multilateral agreements. For this reason, CSO engagement with ASEAN does not contribute to regional integration from below.

2. The Engagement of Organized Groups in Wealth Creation and the Equitable Redistribution of Wealth for the People's Welfare and Environmental Conservation

All forms of alternatives—economic, political, social, and cultural alternatives—contribute to strengthening the capacity of organized groups to create and redistribute wealth for the benefit of the people and the environment. Any organization that runs an enterprise expects to generate profits or surpluses. There are many not-for-profit organizations (e.g. nongovernment organizations [NGOs], self-help groups, community-based organizations, etc.) that operate their own enterprises to support their social objectives. What matters, in the final analysis, is that the surpluses are principally reinvested to advance the organization's social objective or social mission. Clearly, this principle runs counter to the ethos of the neoliberal socioeconomic framework.

3. Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is a concept and practice that is based on direct action, cooperation, mutual understanding, and solidarity. Mutual aid is not charity. Rather, it is the building and continuing of new social relations where people give what they can and get what they need, outside of unjust systems of power. In contrast, ASEAN adopts the principle of “noninterference,” in which member-states do not meddle in each other’s internal affairs and governance.¹

4. Democratic/Participatory Governance

Organized groups demonstrate the necessity of people’s participation in governance to ensure the right of the community. The principle of democratic or participatory governance enables member control through active participation in setting policies and making decisions, and through holding elected representatives accountable. Through democratic/participatory people’s movements at the community level, collective action and community empowerment are achieved. Communities then gain the power to demand their rights.

5. Voluntary Cooperation

Voluntary participation refers to people’s involvement in the establishment and management of commons or common property resources with little or no coercion. Participation in people’s organizations (POs) is not forced or compulsory. Therefore, it must involve a significant element of choice. Members and users join and remain in an organization or movement voluntarily and freely, without penalty or the threat of a penalty for nonparticipation. POs may engage in voluntary cooperation and mutual support with other POs or CBOs, thereby creating vertical and horizontal structures.

1 Mieke Motlhof, “ASEAN and the Principle of Non-interference,” E-International Relations, 8 February 2012. <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/02/08/asean-and-the-principle-of-non-interference/>

6. Independence and Autonomy

POs are self-governed. They must enjoy autonomy and independence from public authorities and other entities outside the PO. They must not be subject to undue interference or control. If they enter into agreements with other CBOs or public- and private-sector actors, or raise capital from external sources, they must do so in terms consistent with the solidarity values and principles. The second strategic task of the ARN is to document the actions of POs, which serve as vehicles for transformative alternatives. MASSA has been actively performing this task since its inception. Major alternatives may be classified into four types:

- ***Economic Alternatives.*** These refer to the practices of organized groups in the creation and redistribution of wealth, which enable them to create decent jobs and contribute to sustainable development. Examples include fair trade, solidarity economy, organic agriculture, community-supported agriculture, zero-waste production, and renewable energy.
- ***Political Alternatives.*** These refer to practices of social movements, the networks of POs and CSOs that enable them to exercise democratic or participatory governance, participate in social and economic activities voluntarily, engage in mutual aid activities, as well as gain independence and autonomy from the neoliberal market economy.
- ***Social Alternatives or Social Inclusion Practices.*** These refer to the alternative practices of socially excluded organized groups that overcome barriers which prevent them from participating in economic, political, and social life. These practices include organizing and building the capacity of various sectors to participate in economic, political, and social alternatives. Examples of sectors include women, persons with disabilities, unemployed youth, sexual and gender minorities, the elderly, Indigenous peoples, and ethnic and racial minorities.
- ***Social Protection Practices.*** These refer to alternative social protection measures practiced by socially excluded groups. These enable them to access social protection programs such as mutual insurance, community-based health care systems, alternative learning avenues, and alternative housing.

- **Cultural Alternatives.** These refer to practices undertaken by networks of visual artists and other performers that highlight the economic, political, and social issues of marginalized sectors. The third task of the ARN is to quantify the impact of these transformative practices in terms of economics, politics, social aspects, and culture.

Dr. Quiñones concluded by stressing the need for MASSA, as a movement, to lead the establishment of an alternative regional network for development. He suggested that MASSA should independently and collectively orchestrate strategic actions toward realizing its vision and mission, noting the proven challenge of transforming existing fora.

In summary, Dr. Quiñones' keynote address provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges posed by the current regional integration model. His keynote address emphasized the need for alternative practices rooted in solidarity, cooperation, and people-centric values.

Open Forum

Following Dr. Quiñones' keynote address, participants from MASSA raised the questions.

Raquel Castillo of Solidarity for People's Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL) posed two questions. First, she inquired about the distinction between the proposed alternatives, rooted in values and principles of solidarity and contemporary approaches like private-public partnerships and multi-stakeholderships. She sought clarity on how the suggested alternatives diverge from current mainstream practices that may lack a pro-people focus.

Next, she raised a concern about the omission of educational practices in the discussion of alternative practices. Education, specifically alternative pedagogy, is crucial for societal progress, given that in the Philippines there is an inadequate education on governance and democracy.

As a response to the second question, Dr. Quiñones suggested that education could be considered as a separate key area for collaboration or included under social inclusion practices.



- Raquel Castillo of SPELL and a MASSA member, started the open forum by asking questions about alternative practices, addressed to Dr. Quinones.

To address the first question, Dr. Quiñones noted the difference between people-oriented partnerships and those advocated by organizations like ASEAN. In contrast to profit-oriented partnerships, where large companies collaborate with small enterprises for increased profit, people-oriented partnerships involve CSOs, NGOs, and community-based groups. These entities, being nonprofit, cannot distribute profit, rather reinvest it in activities or social missions. The distinction between profit generation and the redistribution of profit involves criticizing programs that focus solely on wealth creation without addressing wealth redistribution. In people-oriented partnerships, the surplus generated is directed back to communities through social services and environmental conservation. This fundamentally differs from the capitalist model, where profit primarily benefits capital owners.

For the second question, Eri Trinurini Adhi of the Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) acknowledged the group's promotion of people-oriented wealth redistribution and related principles. She expressed concern about the adoption of these principles by governments and international institutions, such as the United Nations. She suggested that while they express support, the practical implementation often falls short. This leads to skepticism about the efficacy of international development efforts, citing issues like the dominance of the formal economy over the informal sector. Eri posed this central query: how does one navigate this situation when the mainstream adopts alternative principles without necessarily effecting meaningful change at the grassroots level?

As a response, Dr. Quiñones underscored the importance of taking advantage of the expanded space for alternative regionalism, cautioning against the potential co-optation by neo-market forces if left unattended. An example of this is engaging with government officials to promote social-solidarity economy (SSE) principles, illustrating the need to align with its principles and agenda rather than succumb to external influences.

In terms of addressing potential partnerships with private companies, Dr. Quiñones discussed four ways for people's organizations to engage with profit-oriented entities. He encouraged proactive thinking, suggesting the development of a roadmap for the next five years as a collective guide for organizations. The roadmap would involve each organization undertaking specific tasks, with MASSA consolidating progress updates during meetings. Additionally, it is vital to propose and leverage a mass base, inviting resource providers, including the government, to collaborate. The ultimate goal is to establish economic bases in supportive municipalities or cities, utilizing the mass base to embed values and principles in the broader community.



- Ryan Silverio of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) delivering the third question for Dr. Quinone's keynote address.

Following this concern on mainstreaming alternative principles, Ryan Silverio of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) posed the third question, outlining key concerns for a regional LGBTQIA+ organization engaging in alternative regionalism. The first concern is the critique of how ASEAN addresses LGBTQIA+ issues. He cites ASEAN's reliance on consensus and domestic particularities that often exclude

gender diversity. The organization's objective is to counter prevailing ASEAN narratives and promote gender equality and diversity. The second concern emphasizes the diversity within the LGBTQIA+ sector, highlighting the importance of intersectionality and recognizing various identities, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous communities, urban poor, and rural folk. The third concern revolves around the issue of pinkwashing and co-opting by large corporations and financial institutions. Silverio stressed the need to mobilize the LGBTQIA+ sector in supporting a social solidarity economy, steering away from corporate influence and focusing on building resources for local communities.

To address ASC's concerns, Dr. Quiñones encourage active participation from the LGBTQIA+ community in the topic of alternative regionalism. Drawing from his experience in Thailand, he highlighted the inclusivity of the *kathoei*² group and their artistic talents. He suggested that the LGBTQIA+ community can contribute to alternative regionalism through their strengths, such as engagement in digital platforms. This stresses the importance of considering each group's strengths and opportunities to strengthen the entire community.

Regarding Silverio's concerns with marginalization and being co-opted by large corporations, Dr. Quiñones reiterated the unique agenda of the initiative, emphasizing the need to resist the temptation of big profits. He articulated support for the active involvement of the LGBTQIA+ group, interpreting their engagement as a proactive commitment to mobilize and enhance the solidarity and productivity of the initiative. In conclusion, Dr. Quiñones urged all excluded sectors, including women, children, and Indigenous peoples, to proactively think about what they can contribute to strengthen the initiative, emphasizing a collaborative approach in developing a five-year roadmap.

For the last insights regarding the keynote address, Anwar Sastro Ma'ruf of Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI) expressed appreciation for the speech, underscoring its pertinence not solely to Indonesia but also to the broader Asian context. He stressed the importance of transforming the presented principles, concepts, and roadmap into collaborative action. Drawing

2 In Thailand, the term "kathoei" or "katoey" refers to individuals who are transgender, identify as a third gender, are intersex, or exhibit characteristics of an effeminate gay man (Nanda, 2008).

on his experience in 2005, with Agustiana of Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP), they developed a roadmap for social movements in Indonesia, including strengthening people's organizations, affiliating sectoral unions, and exploring political party development. Sastro highlighted the unique composition of their People Movement Confederation, uniting diverse perspectives under one umbrella.

Sastro also shared the discussions on social-solidarity economy and transitioning from capitalism to socialism based on KPRI's economic manifesto. Achieving this necessitates collaborative efforts from organizations. Sastro also underscored the growth from a small community in Indonesia to a regional community in Southeast Asia and South Asia.



- Sastro of KPRI discussing the importance of the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) based on their experiences.

As a response to Sastro's insights, Dr. Quiñones reiterated the need for peoples' organizations and NGOs to focus on wealth creation rather than relying solely on charity or donations. As Sastro emphasized, these entities need to collaborate in developing projects that attract resources, emphasizing the importance of financial sustainability. He urged movements to shift their focus from merely recruiting new members to also growing and securing sufficient resources to support their initiatives. He proposed for the creation of wealth-generating projects within various sectors, such as education and health, as a strategy to establish alternatives to the dominant neoliberal market economy.

Thematic Discussion

To start the thematic discussions, AltDev program staff divided the participants into five groups. The groups were assigned to discuss their takeaways from the thematic discussion and answer the guide questions posed by the facilitators. Below is the list of participants in their respective groups.

Break-out Group 1:

- Emellia Tamoh (Pemangkin Research Malaysia)
- Chandy Eng (GADC)
- Yuli Rustinawati (ASC Indonesia)
- Jenito Santana (KSI)
- Carlos Sarmento (UNAER)
- Angeli Lacson (Good Food Community)
- Mabi (Good Food Community)
- Ernie (HomeNet Philippines)

Break-out Group 2:

- Phoungvyna Sangva (GADC)
- Raquel Castillo (SPELL)
- Elisabeth Lino de Araujo (APHEDA)
- Eri Trinurini Adhi (ASEC Indonesia)
- Ben Quiñones (ASEC)
- Suntaree Saeng-ging (Homenet Regional)
- Rene Ofreneo (FDC)

Break-out Group 3:

- Seavmey Ngorn (GADC)
- Wanun Permpibul (CWT)
- Ryan Silverio (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus)

- Hill Encierto (HomeNet Philippines)
- Ashley Saxby (Asia Floor Wage Alliance)
- Angging Aban (AltDev)
- Cora Fabros (Stop the War Coalition)

Break-out Group 4:

- Hans Bautista (ICAN)
- Benjamin Velasco (PM)
- Agustiana (KPRI)
- Wira Ginting (AFWA)
- Ramesh Bhatti (VS)
- Yuli Riswati (Kabar Bumi)
- Ruel Punongbayan (11.11.11)

Break-out Group 5:

- Anabel Julian (FDC)
- Erni Kartini (SPP)
- Eileen Pupos (SOLAIR)
- Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
- Josephine Parilla (Homenet)
- Ricky Amukti (KPRI)
- Sastro Ma'ruf (KPRI)
- Thanaraj Murudi (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for SDGs)



- Conference's participants being grouped by AltDev's program staff for the thematic discussion segment.



- Conference's participants greeting each other while they are being grouped for the thematic discussion.

Thematic Discussion 1: The Geopolitics of the US–China Rivalry and the Critique of ASEAN

■ Professor Aurora de Dios

*Executive Director, Women and Gender Institute (WAGI)
Miriam College, Philippines*

■ Professor Emeritus Eduardo Tadem

*Facilitator
Convenor, Program on Alternative Development
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies*

Commencing the first thematic discussion on the geopolitics of the United States–China rivalry and the critique of ASEAN, Dr. Eduardo Tadem highlighted Professor Aurora de Dios’s extensive background in governmental roles, particularly as the Senior Project Director of the Women and Gender Institute. Her notable positions include representing the Philippines to the ASEAN Commission on Women and Children’s Rights and chairing the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women. Dr. Tadem accentuated the distinctive approach Prof. de Dios would bring to the discussion on the geopolitics of the United States–China rivalry. This approach involves a unique gendered lens, offering a novel perspective amid the conventional discussions on the topic.

Prof. de Dios began the discussion by reminiscing about the allure of Mao and the fascination with Maoism during a time when there was idealism about a socialist society. However, she noted that these illusions have been dispelled in recent years. She then outlined her intention to focus on two main points: (1) to explore the possibilities and limitations inherent in a regional organization, specifically ASEAN, focusing on its management of organizational promises aligned with its self-defined mission; and (2) to elucidate ASEAN’s approach to external affairs and the subsequent impact on its credibility and viability as a regional organization committed to effectiveness.



- Prof. de Dios delivering her presentation on the Geopolitics of the US-China Rivalry and the Critique of ASEAN.

Prof. de Dios reflected on ASEAN's evolution over the past fifty years. Drawing from her seven years of service within the organization, she characterized ASEAN as a high-end debating club that held numerous meetings but often lacked tangible action on urgent issues such as the Rohingya crisis and the South China Sea dispute. Despite having substantial funding, ASEAN appeared, in her view, to be less proactive than anticipated.

With a population exceeding 700 million, ASEAN has become one of the world's most dynamic economies and a significant player in global trade, ranking as the fifth-largest economy. Throughout its five-decade history, ASEAN has sought to establish its identity and relevance by addressing challenges such as maintaining peace and security, managing interstate tensions, countering external threats, and promoting socioeconomic development among member states.

Notably, ASEAN, initially a state-centric organization, grappled with defining norms, establishing mechanisms, and institutionalizing structures without intervening in political and military matters among its member countries. In 2010, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Charter, marking a significant shift in orientation. The charter provided a legal foundation and institutional framework for ASEAN, codifying norms, rules, and values. Astonishingly, it declared its commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and good governance for the first time since its inception.



- Prof. de Dios delivering her presentation on the Geopolitics of the US-China Rivalry and the Critique of ASEAN

Prof. de Dios also expressed her surprise as ASEAN focused on “people-centered development,” aligning itself with the United Nations. This catch-all slogan became the battle cry for numerous NGOs urging ASEAN to take action in this new direction. To fulfill this commitment, ASEAN opened its doors to civil society and nonstate actors, establishing human rights mechanisms like the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), and the ASEAN Commission on Migrant Labor. Despite accommodating NGOs in consultative processes, their participation remained restrained by restrictive guidelines. This led to limited tracking, monitoring, and substantive recommendations from the NGO community.

While these newly established bodies exhibited strength in rhetoric, implementation proved to be challenging. However, the dynamic engagement and push from the NGO community fueled momentum. With regard to the South China Sea issue, conflicting interests among ASEAN countries, varying levels of economic and political commitments to China, and differing degrees of interest in addressing the matter created a complex landscape. Delays in the code of conduct allowed China to occupy, reclaim, and militarize land features. Likewise, impose fishing bans in disputed waters and harass fisherfolk from neighboring countries.

Prof. de Dios also underscored that ASEAN, in an attempt to salvage its image, took steps to address the Myanmar issue by banning the junta leader's participation in the last leaders' summit. However, ASEAN refrained from condemning the atrocities committed by the military regime in Myanmar.

Regarding the issue of the South China Sea, Prof. de Dios pointed out ASEAN's history of inaction and passivity, citing its inability and unwillingness to assert relevance due to principles like noninterference, respect for national sovereignty, and decision-making by consensus. The consensus among ASEAN countries is challenging, especially considering their varying commitments to China. Despite ASEAN's desire to assert centrality and resolve challenges within its territory, it faces considerable challenges in addressing the intractable issues of Myanmar and the South China Sea.

The failure to address the South China Sea issue has exacerbated the competition between the United States and China. While ASEAN is sometimes encouraged by the United States to play a regional leadership role, it still lacks the capacity to intervene meaningfully due to the constraints of the "ASEAN way." ASEAN's limited role is further highlighted by the complex relationship between the United States and China, both with high stakes in maintaining political and economic hegemony in the region. China's reliance on the South China Sea for energy needs and trade, coupled with the United States' dependence on freedom of navigation, intensifies its interests in maintaining a stalemate in the region. Both powers have turned to alliances that do not prominently include ASEAN, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad (composed of the United States, Australia, Japan, and India) and the Australia–United Kingdom tandem.

Prof. de Dios also analyzed the challenges faced by ASEAN in the context of the South China Sea stalemate. She underscored China's efforts to expand its defense perimeter to safeguard its coasts from potential United States attacks. These efforts have led to a military standoff between the two superpowers. Prof. de Dios expressed concern for the smaller countries caught in the middle, emphasizing ASEAN's marginalization due to its inability to assert decision-making powers.

To address the South China Sea issue, she critiqued China's unilateral and aggressive actions, bypassing negotiations with ASEAN countries and sidelining the regional organization. Prof. de Dios suggested the potential threat of

brinkmanship between the United States and China, underscoring ASEAN's limited role in the resolution.

On the prospect of alternative regionalism, Prof. de Dios discussed the need for a formal organization representing civil society. She proposed either formal representation at the ASEAN table for CSOs or the creation of a structured regional organization defining its goals and dialogue processes with formal ASEAN. Prof. de Dios expressed dissatisfaction with the current ritualized engagement between official bodies and NGOs, advocating for more substantive changes.

The challenges in achieving significant reforms within ASEAN, given the institutionalization of authoritarian regimes and military dictatorships. Prof. de Dios emphasized the need for civil society to act as *fiscalizers*, demanding accountability and advocating for reforms within the economic integration framework and human rights agenda.

In conclusion, Prof. de Dios acknowledged ASEAN's capacity to address issues, citing the ouster or non-admission of the Myanmar junta leader as a significant step. However, she remained skeptical about ASEAN's role in the South China Sea issue and the substantive accommodation of NGO demands. She proposed the exploration of alternative NGO structures for a more permanent and responsive engagement.



- Dr. Tadem facilitating the open forum and expressing gratitude for Prof. de Dios' presentation.

Open Forum

In closing the discussion on the geopolitics of the United States–China rivalry and the critique of ASEAN, Dr. Tadem acknowledged the need for sincere discussions and attention to the people's needs in Southeast Asia. He reiterated Prof. de Dios' perspective, that the only viable alternative lies in civil society and people's organizations coming together to establish an alternative regionalism.

Following Prof. de Dios' discussion, Eri Trinurini Adhi of the Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) posed the first question. She noted that grassroots organizations, advocating for people's rights, often find themselves at the forefront of the struggle. Recognizing ASEAN's limitations in dealing with issues like the South China Sea, NGOs, and CSOs need to join forces and amplify their concerns and advocacies. However, while organizations themselves have been collaborating, they suffer from capacity gaps. To address this, Eri proposed broadening the scope of engagement to include nonstate actors. This expanded network would encompass academicians and research centers, which, being nongovernment entities, might possess the capability to address issues beyond grassroots economic concerns. Eri sought Prof. de Dios's insights on the potential of involving universities and research centers in advocating for the voices of the people, particularly in the context of the US–China rivalry.



- Eri Trinurini Adhi of ASEC posing the first question for Prof. de Dios' presentation.

Prof. de Dios acknowledged Eri's observation. Academic and research institutions within civil society groups play a significant role in working towards a more robust ASEAN at the grassroots level. Example of this include the Program on Alternative Development in the Philippines, which Dr. Tadem convened. Numerous research institutions and universities have extended their focus beyond academic studies of ASEAN, actively participating in the broader movement for an alternative civil society or regional grouping.

Prof. de Dios also highlighted the Coalition of Liberals and Democrats, a group consisting of politicians in the minority or opposition. Despite the dominance of authoritarian regimes in the region, this coalition seeks to organize opposition members from traditional political parties, including prominent nationalist business groups, progressive groups, and research institutions in universities. These efforts reflect the diverse and collaborative nature of civil society initiatives involving academic and research entities in shaping the discourse on ASEAN.

Yuli Rustinawati of ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) also raised a question about the feasibility of forming a formally structured regional organization as an alternative, considering the perceived rigidity of ASEAN. Yuli inquired whether such a structure should mirror the ASEAN way and if it could effectively address the needs of grassroots organizations.



- Yuli Rustinawati of ASC raising a question about the feasibility of forming a alternative regional organization.

Regarding the concerns about formal regional organization, Prof. de Dios acknowledged that organizations are often viewed negatively in a blanket manner. Drawing from her experience, she mentioned positive initiatives within ASEAN committees that aimed to connect with grassroots efforts and make the organization's work relevant. For instance, she highlighted her seven years on the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) efforts were made to engage with NGOs through regular consultations, crisis center visitations, and the development of a regional action plan on violence against women. Prof. de Dios emphasized that change within an organization is incremental and depends on individuals within committees who are open to recommendations. While acknowledging voices advocating for grassroots orientation, ASEAN's overall direction tends to be elitist and business-oriented. This orientation makes it challenging to infuse a people-centered agenda unless there is openness to such recommendations from individuals within the committees.

For the third question, Raquel Castillo of Solidarity for People's Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL) addressed the geopolitical complexities beyond ASEAN. She focused on the impact of the US–China rivalry on the entire region, including East Asia. She highlighted the challenges faced by countries in navigating their positions amidst the rivalry. She also pointed out instances where ASEAN's response seemed inadequate, such as the issues with Japan and South Korea. Given this, she asked Prof. de Dios for her insights on how Southeast Asian nations, including those within ASEAN, could adeptly navigate these complex dynamics.

Prof. de Dios acknowledged the difficulty ASEAN faces in finding its voice. This challenge arises from the complex interplay of geographical features and great power interventions, which hinder ASEAN's ability to influence the behavior of competing powers. She noted the absence of a *modus vivendi* and the lack of bargaining power for ASEAN. This, as she noted, leads to the United States seeking alliances elsewhere. ASEAN's centrality and neutrality have not translated into influence in the ongoing dialogues. Prof. de Dios emphasized the need for ASEAN to find its position and navigate the complex landscape. In this manner, it can find its meaningful voice in the competition over the South China Sea. She acknowledged the growing complexity of the issue involving Japan, India, and beyond. However, she highlighted the current challenge for ASEAN, where conflicting interests among member states, like Cambodia's reluctance to side with Vietnam or the Philippines, render the organization practically ineffective in addressing the South China Sea dispute.



■ Ricky Amukti of KPRI delivering the last question for this segment's open forum.

For the last question, Ricky Amukti of Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI) posed three points regarding his inquiry: (1) how ASEAN communities could anticipate and leverage the US–China rivalry; (2) an inclusive approach towards proposed community investments; and (3) creation of a domino effect to achieve their goals despite a lack of direct communication. He suggested focusing on specific Chinese actors, such as Han Zheng, the vice minister of China, for discussions within academia.

In response, Prof. de Dios emphasized that opening lines of communication with China is not impossible, even amid conflicts in the South China Sea. She advocated for maintaining diplomatic channels to foster communication not only between government officials but also among people and organizations. Prof. de Dios drew parallels with conflicts like the Palestinian–Israeli issue, where people-to-people interactions and third-party interventions broke deadlocks. Regarding China, she noted that while aggressive territorial actions persist, China maintains economic relations with Southeast Asian countries. Prof. de Dios highlighted China’s pragmatic strategy of continuing economic diplomacy while assertively asserting territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Breakout Discussion

After the open forum, Dr. Tadem proceeded to organize the breakout session into five groups. He instructed the participants to refer to the guide questions to facilitate their discussion:

1. What positions should progressive movements take on the US–China rivalry in Southeast Asia?
2. What do you see is the main problem with the ASEAN model of regional integration?



- Dr. Tadem posing the guide questions for the breakout discussion.



- Participants in breakout groups engaging in a productive exchange of ideas in response to the guide questions. They demonstrated collective enthusiasm, profound interest, and receptiveness to each other's insights. Following the discussion, group representatives presented their findings.

BREAKOUT GROUP 1

1. Emellia Tamoh (Pemangkin Research Malaysia)
2. Chandy Eng (GADC)
3. Yuli Rustinawati (ASC Indonesia)
4. Jenito Santana (KSI)
5. Carlos Sarmento (UNAER)
6. Angeli Lacson (Good Food Community)
7. Mabi David (Good Food Community)
8. Ernesto Prieto (HomeNet Philippines)

KEY POINTS

What positions should progressive movements take on the US-China rivalry in Southeast Asia?

Participants expressed their country-specific concerns and problems arising from the presence of the United States and China. This shed light on the complex geopolitical landscape.

- **Cambodia:** The Cambodian government's close economic ties with China sparked issues related to human trafficking and other crimes. While articulating discontent with China's encroachment of power, the sentiment was mixed, acknowledging the economic benefits from China's financial contributions.
- **Philippines:** Food insecurity persists, but the government's focus on solutions is primarily corporate-centric. Examples of these solutions include the promotion of pesticides, fertilizers, and resilient seeds. Despite the farmers' desire to adopt environment-friendly practices, such as using green organic fertilizers, the high cost often leads them to choose synthetic alternatives. Additionally, heavy reliance on fertilizers has adverse effects on public health.
- **Timor-Leste:** The government of Timor-Leste adopted a nonpartisan stance in the US-China rivalry. The US government's financial aid to Timor-Leste was noted during the discussion.
- **Indonesia:** China's presence in Indonesia was predominantly seen in infrastructure development initiatives.

- **Thailand:** Concerns were raised about China's control over the Mekong River. Despite the region benefiting from the river, participants from Thailand also expressed their frustration with ASEAN's perceived inaction on the matter.
- **Malaysia:** Malaysia's government opted for a Non-Alignment Approach, refraining from taking sides in the geopolitical rivalry. The decision was influenced by a desire to capitalize on the foreign direct investment opportunities offered by both the United States and China.

What do you see is the main problem with the ASEAN model of regional integration?

- **Profit and Capital Over People:** The ASEAN model was criticized for being controlled by profit and capital interests rather than prioritizing the well-being of the people. Participants cited instances where corporations influenced state policies, with the United States and China using economic ties to strengthen their presence in the region.
- **Corporate and State Capture:** The concept of corporations capturing the state and vice versa was discussed. They cited examples of US-based multinational corporations (MNCs) and China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs) shaping the geopolitical landscape in ASEAN countries.
- **Noninterference Principle:** The noninterference principle of ASEAN was identified as a significant problem. This principle, while maintaining state sovereignty, was seen as limiting the organization's ability to address critical issues and intervene in matters affecting the welfare of its people.

Recommendations, Takeaways, and/or Insights

In summary, the group agreed that CSOs and progressive movements within ASEAN should take a critical stance in the US-China rivalry. The dichotomy of supporting one power over the other was viewed as a false solution. Instead, the group emphasized exposing how both powers prioritize their interests over the welfare of ASEAN's people as the United States and China seek to exploit the region's resources.

BREAKOUT GROUP 2

1. Phoungvyna Sangva (GADC)
2. Raquel Castillo (SPELL)
3. Elisabeth Lino de Araujo (APHEDA)
4. Eri Trinurini Adhi (ASEC Indonesia)
5. Ben Quinones (ASEC)
6. Suntaree Saeng-ging (Homenet Regional)
7. Rene Ofreneo (FDC)
8. Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
9. Eduardo Tadem (UP CIDS AltDev)

What positions should progressive movements take on the US–China rivalry in Southeast Asia?

- **Indonesia:** A pro-China sentiment was noted within the country. However, CSOs unanimously maintain a critical stance. It is important to emphasize that CSOs are independent actors, detached from geopolitical influences.
- **Thailand:** Diverse opinions were evident as various groups emerged. Some, with Chinese ancestry, tended to be anti-American, while progressive groups aimed to balance the power dynamic through uprisings and advocacy. However, their impact was perceived as limited as the government remained unresponsive.
- **Timor-Leste:** The government faced challenges in decision-making due to significant Chinese investments. CSOs, observing potential threats to local businesses, opposed China's dominance in business activities. This opposition signaled conflict between state and civil society perspectives.
- **Philippines:** While recognizing China's economic influence, participants called attention to the need for a balanced approach. They stressed advocating for dialogue, peaceful development, and respect for international resolutions, most especially in the South China Sea. Environmental degradation in areas where China invested was a shared concern as well.

What do you see is the main problem with the ASEAN model of regional integration?

- **Lack of People's Influence:** People's limited control over government policies is a common challenge. This was exemplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The influx of Chinese communities creating "Chinatowns" raised concerns about the displacement of local businesses, revealing a power imbalance
- **Noninterference Principle:** The principle of noninterference among ASEAN countries was identified as a barrier to effective collaboration. Expectations for collective action were low due to the reluctance of countries to interfere in each other's affairs.

Recommendations, Takeaways, and/or Insights

In summary, the position of progressive movements on the US–China rivalry in Southeast Asia was varied, depending on each country's perspective. However, all agreed that CSOs should maintain a critical position in the US–China rivalry. The participants underscored the call for China to respect the rights of Southeast Asian countries, particularly in resolutions like the South China Sea.

Leveraging Rivalry for People's Advantage:

- **Technology and Investment:** Participants discussed seizing opportunities in technology and investments while ensuring fair wages and favorable conditions for workers.
- **Shared Resources:** Participants identified common interests, such as the Mekong River. Suggestions included opening spaces for CSOs in decision-making mechanisms and curbing weapon spending in the region.

Concrete Actions by CSOs:

- **Networking:** Participants proposed building networks across countries to address shared concerns. They encouraged collaborative efforts involving organizations from Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, and even Chinese communities in Taiwan and Hong Kong.
- **Accountability:** CSOs were tasked with holding China accountable for its investments, emphasizing the importance of monitoring and addressing potential abuses and exploitation.

BREAKOUT GROUP 3

1. Seavmey Ngorn (GADC)
2. Wanun Permpibul (CWT)
3. Ryan Silverio (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus)
4. Hill Encierto (Homenet)
5. Ashley Saxby-Pinkerton (Asia Floor Wage Alliance)
6. Angging Aban (UP CIDS AltDev)
7. Cora Fabros (Stop the War Coalition)

KEY POINTS

What positions should progressive movements take on the US–China rivalry in Southeast Asia?

The group pointed out the need to simplify complex geopolitical issues for directly impacted communities. They focused on unpacking and analyzing concepts such as the Indo-Pacific framework and its relevance in Southeast Asia. This discussion underscored the importance of presenting information in an accessible manner to the community, steering away from taking sides and encouraging a nuanced understanding of both China and US investments.

A crucial point indicated was the necessity to actively listen to grassroots and to those working on the ground. By doing so, progressive movements can better comprehend the real-life impacts of geopolitical rivalries on local communities, fostering a more informed and inclusive approach.

What do you see is the main problem with the ASEAN model of regional integration?

The primary concern identified was the limited space afforded to CSOs and the inadequate inclusion of people from local communities in national and regional discussions and platforms. There was a shared sentiment that the current digitalization trend, while advancing, often excludes marginalized voices from actively participating in important processes.

An additional concern centered around the failure of the ASEAN model to effectively address and prioritize pressing issues. The transition to green work, where certain jobs were becoming obsolete, was cited as an example. This transition raised questions about the mechanisms in place to support those who had been involved from the beginning. Participants highlighted the need for a

comprehensive and inclusive approach to regional integration. This ensures that the entire spectrum of society, especially marginalized individuals, becomes part of the process.

Recommendations, Takeaways, and/or Insights

- ***People-centered Communication:*** The discussion emphasized the importance of crafting messages that resonate with the community, ensuring that complex geopolitical issues are unpacked and analyzed in a manner accessible to all.
- ***Grassroots Engagement:*** Active listening to grassroots communities emerged as a key strategy for progressive movements to understand and address the real-life impacts of geopolitical rivalries.
- ***Inclusive Digitalization:*** Participants underscored the need to bridge the digital divide and include marginalized voices in the digitalization process as a crucial step in achieving more inclusive regional integration.
- ***Prioritizing People:*** A call to prioritize people in the transition to green work was emphasized. Addressing key challenges faced by those whose jobs may become obsolete was illustrated as a critical consideration within the ASEAN model.

BREAKOUT GROUP 4

1. Hans Bautista (ICAN)
2. Benjamin Velasco (PM)
3. Agustiana (KPRI)
4. Wira Ginting (AFWA)
5. Ramesh Bhatti (VS)
6. Yuli Riswati (Kabar Bumi)
7. Ruel Punongbayan (11.11.11)

KEY POINTS

What positions should progressive movements take on the US–China rivalry in Southeast Asia?

Beyond the conventional state-to-state rivalry, the discussion highlighted the intricate business rivalry that permeates in the region. Examples such as weapon dealings and gambling illustrated the potential for armed technology to be employed in creating conflicts solely for profit.

The group's discussion also reviewed the historical contexts, such as Indonesia's experience with the New Order regime and its arms acquisition from the United States. Myanmar's evolving relationship with China was also examined, with nations having to bolster their armed technology capabilities for trade development. Resistance to Chinese investments in western Indonesia was presented as a tangible example of people's movements, influencing economic decisions. Solidarity emerged as a key theme, underlining the importance of collective action among ASEAN people to navigate the complex economic and geopolitical landscape shaped by the US-China rivalry.

What do you see is the main problem with the ASEAN model of regional integration?

Participants critically analyzed the ASEAN model of regional integration, questioning its actual level of integration.

Participants identified the principle of noninterference within ASEAN as a significant challenge. This principle has limited the organization's ability to address human rights violations and socioeconomic issues within member states. They echoed the call for a clear vision for ASEAN beyond a mere placeholder, emphasizing the need to create an order that is genuinely representative of the region's diverse population.

Participants also raised concerns about ASEAN's limited ability to hold member states accountable for violations.

Furthermore, the participants considered the principle of nonviolence as a crucial aspect to be imposed within ASEAN. They advocated for a pacific force that promotes nonviolence and peace, including the withdrawal of military bases and factors that could incite violence in the region.

Recommendations, Takeaways, and/or Insights

- ***Solidarity and People's Resistance:*** Participants underscored the importance of solidarity and people's resistance against profit-driven agenda in the US-China rivalry as a potent force for change.
- ***Reevaluation of ASEAN Principles:*** The discussion prompted a reevaluation of ASEAN principles, with a particular focus on noninterference and the need for a more integrated and inclusive regional governance model.
- ***Clear Vision for ASEAN:*** Participants declared the urgency of developing a clear vision for ASEAN that places people at the center, ensuring that regional integration aligns with the interests and well-being of its diverse population.

BREAKOUT GROUP 5

1. Anabel Julian (FDC)
2. Erni Kartini (SPP)
3. Eileen (SOLAIR)
4. Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
5. Josephine Parilla (HomeNet Philippines)
6. Ricky Amukti (KPRI)
7. Sastro Maruf (KPRI)
8. Thanaraj Murudi (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for SDGs)

What do you see is the main problem with the ASEAN model of regional integration?

- **Lack of Concrete Plan:** Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the absence of a concrete plan within ASEAN, indicating a need for clearer and more strategic regional integration.
- **Too Much Diversity:** The diverse nature of ASEAN member states, encompassing different ideologies, cultures, and economic structures, was seen as a significant challenge to effective regional integration.
- **On Ideological Differences:** The discussion underlined the ideological differences among ASEAN member states as a hindrance to cohesive regional integration.

Recommendations, Takeaways, and/or Insights

- **Simultaneous Mobilizations:** The proposal to organize simultaneous mobilizations and rallies across ASEAN countries emerged as a potential collective action to address the US–China rivalry.
- **Neutrality with Alternatives:** While neutrality was considered for the immediate future, the group emphasized the importance of progressive movements presenting alternatives rather than adopting a purely neutral stance.
- **Addressing Economic Disparities:** Participants discussed the idea of challenging economic disparities by introducing alternative economic frameworks that leverage the diverse resources. This was seen as a potential strategy.

Thematic Discussion 2: Food, Environment, and Just Transition in Relation to Labor Issues

- **Wanun Permpibul**
Executive Director, Climate Watch Thailand
- **Suntaree Saeng-ging**
Homenet Southeast Asia
- **Wira Ginting**
Moderator, Asia Floor Wage Alliance

For the second thematic discussion on food, environment, and just transition in relation to labor issues, the session facilitator, Wira Ginting of Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) introduced the two speakers for the discussion: Wanun from Climate Watch Thailand and Suntaree from Homenet Southeast Asia. Both addressed the topic through different analytical lenses—examining climate and environmental impact, and the perspective of informal home-based workers respectively.



- Wira Ginting of AFWA facilitating the second thematic discussion on food, environment, and just transition in relation to labor issues.

Following this, Ginting further provided a context to the thematic discussion issue. He discussed the global narrative on the food crisis, particularly in Indonesia, whose government's response was the introduction of a food estate, leading to widespread land grabbing and displacement of indigenous people for rice plantations. Another concern was the shift from fossil fuels to biofuels, resulting in similar land-grabbing practices for palm oil plantations, not only in Indonesia but also in other countries. To delve more deeply into this topic, he introduced the first speaker, Wanun Permpibul who offered nuanced perspectives on the climate impact.



- Wanun of CWT delivering her presentation for the thematic discussion two, with a specific focus on climate change and the impact of false solutions.

Wanun Permpibul is the Executive Director of Climate Watch Thailand (CWT) and has extensive experience working on climate issues with various groups such as women, farmers, fisherfolk, and workers. CWT collaborates with communities and engages in community-led adaptation. It also addresses the limits to adaptation leading to loss and damage, promotes decentralized energy systems and eco-farming, exposes false solutions in the food sector, monitors climate finance, and supports community-led initiatives. These efforts contribute to national and regional policy advocacy.

On Climate Change and the Impact of False Solutions

Wanun started her presentation by highlighting the importance of discussing climate impacts and the consequences of what she termed as “false [climate] solutions.” She emphasized the tangible impacts of climate change, extending beyond physical and biological effects to include the repercussions of implemented solutions by governments.

She underscored that climate change is not just a theoretical concept. It has been significantly experienced on the ground, especially by those working in agriculture, fishing, and Indigenous communities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirmed that harmful human activities destroy the environment, leading to extreme climate events with increased severity and intensity.

To substantiate this, Wanun elucidated manifestations of climate change that occur in daily human life. These encompass, but are not limited to, extreme heat, erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, shortages in water resources, and elevated susceptibility to forest fires precipitated by drought conditions. Additionally, she underscored the vulnerability of nations reliant on oceans, particularly in Southeast Asia, where coral reefs face bleaching, exerting repercussions on marine ecosystems and livelihoods.

Providing further context in Southeast Asian nations, the region has been witnessing an increase in extreme climatic events, such as storms, landslides, and earthquakes, all directly linked to climate change. She noted that over the last decade, the frequency of these events has doubled in the region. This underscores the urgency of addressing the tangible impacts of climate change within countries.

Wanun explained that the causes of climate change are not natural but rather the result of harmful human activities like the immense emission of greenhouse gasses. Carbon dioxide, primarily from burning fossil fuels, contributes to over seventy-five percent of global warming. Methane and nitrous oxide, originating from rice cultivation and chemical fertilizers, respectively, are also significant contributors. Wanun highlighted the role of major actors, including countries like China and Brazil, tracing back to the historical roots of climate change—the Industrial Revolution and colonization. The UN Climate Change convention refers to these roots as industrialization, while other groups outside the UN frame it as a product of colonization and capitalism, all contributing to higher carbon emissions.

Upon identifying the systemic factors contributing to climate change, Wanun underscored the need to understand both the physical and social impacts of climate change. She emphasized the importance of engaging local groups and marginalized communities to recognize the diverse effects experienced worldwide. In Thailand, for instance, while strong solar radiation benefits salt farmers, it poses a threat to rice crops. She stressed the necessity of unpacking these impacts collectively with affected communities rather than adopting a highly centralized approach.

Wanun addressed key aspects of climate issues starting with mitigation. Wanun also highlighted the need to reduce carbon emissions, particularly emphasizing the role of carbon dioxide emissions from coal and gas, attributing responsibility to the Global North. The second aspect of climate issues is adaptation. Wanun emphasized the need to assess impacts at different levels, particularly considering individuals working in various sectors who experience the effects of climate change, such as heat and drought. She underscored the importance of understanding these impacts to inform relevant policies. Likewise, Wanun acknowledged the limitations people face in adjusting to these changes, leading to the discussion of loss and damage, which was recently addressed and adopted during the climate convention. Loss and damage encompass both economic and noneconomic aspects.

Furthermore, Wanun delved into the issues of climate finance, emphasizing the dependence of developing countries on the support and capacities of developed nations. Climate finance is not considered aid. It is rather a debt owed by developed countries responsible for climate impacts. In the spirit of climate justice, she advocated for the granting of funds instead of loaning them. Additionally, she discussed the importance of making advanced technologies owned by the Global North available to developing countries in the public domain for direct access.

To conclude her discussion, Wanun delved into the actions undertaken by the Global North in response to climate change. She delineated the five key aspects: mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, climate finance, and technologies.

The mitigation strategies of the Global North primarily involve corporate interests. As such, the Global North perceives emission reduction as economically burdensome. Countries in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, have relied heavily

on fossil fuels. They find the transition to renewable energy economically challenging. Instead of providing direct financial support, the Global North proposes carbon trading, a system where developing countries engage in emission reduction activities and sell avoided emissions to the Global North or corporations.

Wanun highlighted the concept of “net zero,” which countries in Southeast Asia embrace. She underscored that net zero calculations are essentially theoretical, wherein corporations emitting carbon dioxide in one location offset their emissions by investing in carbon sinks in other regions. These offsets create a false sense of achieving emission neutrality.

Wanun’s discussion also expanded to climate technologies promoted by some big companies, including controversial methods like ocean fertilization to enhance algae growth for carbon absorption. Wanun emphasized that such technologies, labeled as “false solutions” pose environmental harm and lack long-term sustainability.

Additionally, Wanun touched upon practices such as smart farming, carbon capture, and storage. In the agricultural sector, companies seek “sustainable rice” to align with global climate change solutions. Meanwhile, in the transport sector, the transition to electric vehicles raises concerns about job displacement.

To end her presentation, Wanun highlighted the grassroots innovations and initiatives in the energy, agriculture, and forestry sectors. However, she cautioned that these efforts alone are insufficient. She called for accountability from major polluters, demanding genuine solutions instead of false ones. More so, she emphasized the importance of scrutinizing regional initiatives involving Japan and South Korea. These support the use of hydrogen and ammonia in the energy sector. She highlighted how they should discern their alignment with true climate change mitigation goals.



- Suntaree of HomeNet Regional delivering her presentation for the thematic discussion two, with a specific focus on climate change and the impact on workers in the informal economy.

Home-Based Workers, Workers in the Informal Economy, and Just Transition

For the next part of the thematic discussion, Suntaree Saeng-ging of Homenet Southeast Asia divided her presentation into three distinct parts:

1. Identification of Home-Based Workers

Home-based workers, as defined, are individuals engaged in work within their homes. Notably, ninety percent of them are women. Globally, there are approximately 250 million home-based workers, constituting eight percent of the total workforce. Data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) reveal that out of these 260 million, 147 million (fifty-seven percent) are women.

2. Climate Change Impact on Home-Based Workers

Suntaree highlighted the impact of climate change on home-based workers, citing a study from South Asia. Factors such as flash floods and abrupt climate changes affect about twenty percent of home-based workers in Southeast Asia, leading to relocations (twenty percent) and shifts in livelihoods (sixteen percent). Part-time employment rises due to increased domestic unpaid work, such as childcare and elderly care, resulting in a two-hour daily increase in unpaid care work.

Suntaree delved into the real situation of home-based workers in Thailand, emphasizing how flooding hampers the production of traditional crafts, thereby affecting income. The concern extended to the impact of technology on supply chains, jobs, and income, emphasizing the need for a just transition that considers the well-being of people alongside environmental concerns.

3. Current Efforts on Behalf of Home-Based Workers

Subsequently, Suntaree recounted the participation of the network of home-based workers, domestic workers, and street vendors in the ILO conference, presenting a position paper during discussions on the issue of just transition. Key outcomes included the acknowledgment of a common global purpose, the recognition of the importance of social dimensions in transitions, and the need for policies that address climate change, decent work, and sustainable development.

Suntaree also detailed Homenet's efforts to ensure the inclusion of informal workers' concerns in discussions. She emphasized principles such as reducing inequality, respecting workers' rights, and adherence to international labor standards. The guiding principles outlined emphasized aligning the informal economy with national development priorities, human rights, gender equality, and social inclusion.

Suntaree concluded her discussion by expressing the commitment of informal workers' movements to aligning with ILO reports, collaborating with governments to ensure technology adaptation, and advocating for just transitions that adequately consider the needs of informal workers.

Open Forum

The open forum began with Jenito Santana of KSI expressing concern about false solutions adopted by big companies. He specifically focused on the government's attempt to build carbon storage in the Timor Sea. He questioned the processes involved, and highlighted the promotion of carbon markets by the state and NGOs. He cited the example of farmers being paid a minimal amount for planting specific trees.

Ramesh Bhatti of Vikalp Sangam followed up by seeking insights into the benefits of the carbon credit business, sharing his observations in India where companies engage in agreements with civil society organizations for carbon credits. He asked Wanun about the local-level impact and sought clarification on the global significance of such initiatives.

In response, Wanun underscored that new terms, such as green mining and sustainable dams are part of false solutions. She expressed skepticism about carbon capture and storage, emphasizing uncertainties, potential harms, and the preference for renewable energy investments over fossil fuels. Wanun also highlighted the conflicts arising within CSOs due to differing opinions on carbon credits, pointing out the need to address the justice issue of climate change.

Subsequently, Wanun criticized the concept of “community carbon credit,” emphasizing that even if communities receive a significant share of the benefits, it does not address the fundamental problem of continued emissions. She argued that carbon credit schemes, while considered as benefit-sharing mechanisms, ultimately allow corporations to continue polluting without reducing emissions. She advocated for a shift in language and approach within CSOs to focus on justice issues and consider alternative ways to measure the impact of community actions on carbon dioxide absorption. She concluded by expressing skepticism about the global benefits of carbon credits or trading. She suggested that such practices may contribute to exceeding the prescribed 1.5°C target without effectively reducing emissions.

The last question for the open forum was raised by Raquel Castillo from SPELL. She asked Suntaree regarding the potential strategy of formalizing informal workers as part of a just transition. Suntaree emphasized the importance of bringing informal workers into the formal economic sector. She highlighted the need to ensure the quality of work and livelihood for informal workers, expanding social protection to cover them. The focus was on income and livelihood security, with a desire to provide social protection to enable access during critical situations. Suntaree also emphasized the significance of social dialogue, advocating for the inclusion of informal workers in decision-making processes and policy discussions.

Wira, building on Suntaree’s response, clarified that the agenda for informal workers was not necessarily to convert them into formal workers. Instead,

the goal was to establish job and income security within the informal sector. He noted that while much attention was given to mitigation discussions, the adaptation aspect, particularly the impact of climate change on workers, had been insufficiently addressed.

Breakout Discussion

Wira proceeded to the breakout groups to delve deeper into the issues discussed, and foster further discussion. He posed the guide questions to facilitate the second break-out session:

1. What are the examples of problems and struggles as a result of climate impact and solutions in your sectors?
2. What are commonalities and challenges? Do we need to address them? To what extent and how? What should be our strategic collective action at the regional level to address them?

The following compilation offers a summary of key insights obtained from each breakout group.

BREAKOUT GROUP 1

1. Emellia Tamoh (Pemangkin Research Malaysia)
2. Chandy Eng (GADC)
3. Yuli Rustinawati (ASC Indonesia)
4. Jenito Santana (KSI)
5. Carlos Sarmento (UNAER)
6. Angeli Lacson (Good Food Community)
7. Mabi David (Good Food Community)
8. Ernesto Prieto (Homenet Philippines)

KEY POINTS

What are the examples of problems and struggles as a result of climate impact and solutions in your sectors?

Participants expressed their country-specific concerns and problems arising from the presence of the United States and China. This shed light on the complex geopolitical landscape.

- **Philippines:** Food insecurity persists, but the government's focus on solutions is primarily corporate-centric. Examples of these solutions include the promotion of pesticides, fertilizers, and resilient seeds. Despite the farmers' desire to adopt environment-friendly practices, such as using green organic fertilizers, the high cost often leads them to choose synthetic alternatives. Additionally, heavy reliance on fertilizers has adverse effects on public health.
- **Cambodia:** Heat stress has led to an increase in domestic violence cases. These cases prompted initiatives such as the promotion of gender-based cafés. This situation creates a loss-and-benefit scenario, where poultry mortality rises due to the elevated temperatures.
- **Timor-Leste:** Climate change poses a threat to food security and, consequently, impacts income. Notably, the choice of roofing materials influences flooding in Timor-Leste. Traditional roofing helps divert rain, while zinc roofing contributes to strong water streams, particularly affecting villagers uphill.
- **Indonesia:** The LGBTQIA+ community faces unjust stigmatization as being responsible for climate change, leading to increased discrimination against LGBTQIA+ workers. The rising temperatures also have a detrimental impact on the working environment quality, consequently affecting the health of workers.

What are the commonalities and challenges? Do we need to address them? To what extent and how? What should be our strategic collective action at the regional level to address them?

- **Commonalities and Challenges:** The discussion converged on the shared challenge of food security across the presented cases. The group acknowledged the importance of agroecology and the need to establish networks of local farmers to address localized food insecurities. The common thread was the recognition that climate change impacts cut across diverse sectors, affecting not only the environment but also social dynamics and economic stability.
- **Strategic Collective Action:** Participants deliberated on the need for strategic collective action at the regional level to address these challenges effectively. The consensus was to advocate for agroecology as a sustainable and community-driven solution to food insecurity. Additionally, the establishment of networks among local farmers was deemed crucial for sharing knowledge, resources, and resilience strategies.

BREAKOUT GROUP 2

1. Phoungvyna Sangva (GADC)
2. Raquel Castillo (SPELL)
3. Elisabeth Lino de Araujo (APHEDA)
4. Eri Trinurini Adhi (ASEC Indonesia)
5. Ben Quinones (ASEC)
6. Suntaree Saeng-ging (Homenet Regional)
7. Rene Ofreneo (FDC)

KEY POINTS

What are the examples of problems and struggles as a result of climate impact and solutions in your sectors?

- Net zero disproportionately impacts the poor. The proposed solution suggests that CSOs explore debt swaps for climate adaptation, diverting funds from corporations directly to CSOs.
- Accountability and authenticity of initiatives like sustainable dams and green industry should be questioned. Participants emphasized scrutiny of efforts by both industries and governments. Climate justice should extend globally, emphasizing climate financing beyond national governments.
- Instances like the 2017 Marawi siege in the Philippines resulted in forced evacuations, hindering return and causing the loss of livelihood among indigenous people. Climate change challenges include decreased food production, which affects children's learning capabilities.
- The focus on large industries, notably industrial livestock production that emits substantial amounts of methane, contrasts with the potential benefits of smallholder production.
- Capitalism's influence on lifestyle choices perpetuates the idea that people need to consume more. It has also led to surplus production of products, which exceeds the actual needs of the people.

What are the commonalities and challenges? Do we need to address them? To what extent and how? What should be our strategic collective action at the regional level to address them?

- **Similar Frameworks of Climate Justice:** Participants emphasized the importance of understanding the root cause of climate issues and identifying the victims to derive comprehensive solutions in terms of climate finance and technology.

- **Community Support:** The need to support communities in responding to and participating in climate solutions was emphasized. The discussion acknowledged that climate change does not affect a single sector; it directly impacts livelihoods.
- **Climate Education:** A key strategic action proposed was the incorporation of climate change education into broader educational curricula. This would extend beyond the environmental perspective, encompassing the consequences of climate change from people's perspectives. This ensures a comprehensive understanding of climate change.

In summary, the group underscored the need for equitable, just, and inclusive approaches to address the complexities of climate change

BREAKOUT GROUP 3

1. Seavmey Ngorn (GADC)
2. Wanun Permpibul (CWT)
3. Ryan Silverio (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus)
4. Hill Encierto (Homenet)
5. Ashley Saxby-Pinkerton (Asia Floor Wage Alliance)
6. Angging Aban (UP CIDS AltDev)
7. Arvin Dimalanta (UP CIDS AltDev)
8. Cora Fabros (Stop the War Coalition)

KEY POINTS

What are the examples of problems and struggles as a result of climate impact and solutions in your sectors?

The roundtable discussion centered on the garment worker sector, where participants expressed a prevailing concern on climate change discussions. While these discussions in the sector predominantly address heat-related issues, they tend to overlook broader implications. Workers highlighted the impact of increased heat on both their work conditions and health, particularly in enclosed spaces lacking adequate air circulation. Notably, unions within the sector were observed to pay minimal attention to climate change issues.

Additional contexts:

- **On Nuclear Energy Promotion:** Participants extended the discussion beyond the garment worker sector to address concerns about the promotion of nuclear energy as a clean alternative. They emphasized the paradox between its purported cleanliness and the documented pollution of air and water. Community members affected by nuclear energy initiatives expressed their disapproval.
- **On Deforestation and Mining's Impact on Indigenous People:** The impact of deforestation and mining on indigenous communities emerged as a significant point of discussion. Participants emphasized the disproportionate consequences faced by indigenous people due to environmental degradation in these contexts.

What are the commonalities and challenges? Do we need to address them? To what extent and how? What should be our strategic collective action at the regional level to address them?

Proposed Solutions:

- **Transition to Renewable Energy:** Acknowledging the urgency of the climate crisis, participants proposed an immediate shift to renewable energy sources. This aligns with the recognition that climate change has reached the emergency level.
- **Government Funding Compensation:** The need for government-funded compensation for individuals impacted by climate change was also recognized. Such compensation could be directed towards purchasing essential supplies like air conditioning and fans for those who have lost their jobs due to climate-related factors.
- **Corporate Responsibility:** Participants underscored the responsibility of companies and private sectors in providing alternative, sustainable utensils and products for their employees. This marked an essential step in mitigating the environmental footprint of industrial activities.

Strategic Collective Action:

- **Cross-Sectoral Discussions:** Participants also recognized the importance of continuing discussions across various sectors and stakeholders. This cross-sectoral approach aimed to broaden the understanding of climate change implications and solutions.

- ***Intersectional Analysis of the Impact of Climate Change:*** Acknowledging that different groups of people are impacted differently by climate change, the breakout group emphasized the necessity of identifying these groups. This nuanced understanding would enable a more effective and inclusive advocacy approach.
- ***Building Solidarity:*** A shared consensus emerged on the need to build solidarity among people affected by climate change. This sentiment reflected a collective commitment to taking action and finding solutions to the issues discussed.
- ***Advocacy-Building:*** The group discussion concluded with a call for continued advocacy-building, emphasizing the importance of uniting diverse sectors and stakeholders to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change.

BREAKOUT GROUP 4

1. Hans Bautista (ICAN)
2. Benjamin Velasco (PM)
3. Agustiana (KPRI)
4. Wira Ginting (AFWA)
5. Ramesh Bhatti (VS)
6. Yuli Riswati (Kabar Bumi)
7. Ruel Punongbayan (11.11.11)

KEY POINTS

What are the examples of problems and struggles as a result of climate impact and solutions in your sectors?

Participants scrutinized country-specific challenges and struggles arising from climate change:

- The discussion commenced with a critique of Indonesian President Joko Widodo's participation in the G20, where he addressed climate change without presenting viable solutions. The participants expressed frustration over the lack of policy changes and government initiatives to combat climate change. While electric vehicles are considered a "solution," their adoption has led to intensified nickel mining.

Despite their government efforts to promote eco-friendly textiles in the garment sector, working conditions persistently remain subpar. People's solidarity has been a means of environmental preservation. However, recent government actions, such as opening previously protected lands to investors, indicate a shift towards profit-oriented policies, compromising preservation efforts.

- In India, solutions often give rise to new problems, exemplified by issues surrounding energy milling.

The lack of awareness about climate change is pervasive. This is exacerbated by the use of alienating jargon, which diminishes public willingness to engage in climate action.

- In the Philippines, land use, such as the establishment of solar farms in the Philippines, was considered a solution to the climate crisis. However, it resulted in the displacement of communities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The Philippines' promotion of mineral extraction, coupled with threats to land defenders through legal measures, highlights challenges in balancing economic interests and environmental preservation.

What are the commonalities and challenges? Do we need to address them? To what extent and how? What should be our strategic collective action at the regional level to address them?

Commonalities and Challenges:

- **Government Inaction:** A shared concern emerged regarding governments not taking decisive actions to combat climate change. The group observed that governments, including Indonesia and India, do not alter policies nor effectively address the root causes of climate impact.
- **Exploitation of Solutions:** The discussion underscored how proposed solutions, such as electric vehicles and renewable energy projects, can inadvertently lead to other problems like increased mining and displacement of communities. In other words, the discourse and/or solutions on climate change are susceptible to hijacking by capitalists, diverting attention from meaningful conversations about sustainable solutions.
- **Alienation and The Use of Jargon:** The use of complex jargon when talking about climate change has fostered lack of awareness and alienation among the general public. These were seen as barriers to widespread engagement in climate action.

Proposed Solutions and Collective Action:

- Adopt simple or indigenous methods to preserve the environment. This approach aims to make environmental preservation more relatable and accessible to the general public.
- Implement community discussions to make environmental preservation relatable to the people. These fora would serve to bridge the gap between environmental concerns and people's daily lives.
- Social protection and wage increases are necessary to enable individuals to survive and act on climate change, especially given the increasing cost of living and meager wages. Higher wages and social security should be integral parts of the discussion.
- Incorporate climate justice into education. Make it a mainstream topic to enable children to understand the problem.
- Implement a systemic change to address the multifaceted challenges engendered by capitalism, particularly in the context of issues related to climate change.

BREAKOUT GROUP 5

1. Anabel Julian (FDC)
2. Erni Kartini (SPP)
3. Josephine Parilla (HomeNet PH)
4. Ricky Amukti (KPRI)
5. Sastro Mar'uf (KPRI)
6. Thanaraj Murudi (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for SDGs)

KEY POINTS

What are the examples of problems and struggles as a result of climate impact and solutions in your sectors?

- Parilla highlighted issues related to extreme heat, leading to the absence of raw materials, loss of production, and income. Solutions included just

transition strategies like backyard gardening and embracing a green and circular economy.

- Amukti addressed challenges faced by farmers and fisherfolks, such as difficulty in harvesting, drought in Indonesia that causes forest fires, high waves affecting fishing, and air pollution that impacts the urban poor. Arabica coffee production is decreasing due to heat sensitivity.
- Murudi pointed out problems with illegal logging and cement mining. Illegal logging affects Indigenous peoples and causes floods. Meanwhile, cement mining leads to health issues.
- Julian discussed the impact of floods, evacuation challenges, and recommendations from CSOs for climate-proofing communities.
- Sastro addressed air pollution, legal victories, and climate crisis discussions in Indonesia. He emphasized the need for public involvement.
- Kartini stated how the decrease in food production and limited water access affected family relations. Women, who typically provide food and fetch water, faced increased challenges.

What are the commonalities and challenges? Do we need to address them? To what extent and how? What should be our strategic collective action at the regional level to address them?

Commonalities:

- Climate change has a pervasive impact on diverse sectors.
- A transition from informal to formal work is essential to attain decent employment.
- An advocacy for a circular economy is crucial for promoting sustainability.

Challenges:

- Informal work is widespread, contributing to climate vulnerabilities.
- Comprehensive solutions are required to address interconnected challenges.

Proposed Collective Actions:

- It is essential to acknowledge and address the naturalization of climate crises.
- Advocacy efforts should focus on transitioning from informal to formal work to promote decent employment.

- Embracing circular economy principles is crucial for fostering sustainable practices.

The need for inclusive dialogue, legal advocacy, and sustainable economic practices emerged as crucial components in mitigating the impact of climate change.

Thematic Discussion 3: Impact of Free Trade Agreements, Finance Capital, and Digitalization

- **Dr. Walden Bello**
Focus on the Global South

- **Raquel Castillo**
Moderator
Solidarity for People's Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL)

For the third thematic discussion, Raquel Castillo introduced Dr. Walden Bello as the designated speaker for the impact of free trade agreements, finance capital, and digitalization. She highlighted his role as a prominent activist in the Philippines and his critical stance on economic globalization. Dr. Bello was also the cofounder of Focus on the Global South in 1995 and played a crucial role in advocating for alternative solutions during the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Known for promoting deglobalization, he addressed the intersectionality of trade, financialization, and digitalization and their impact on marginalized sectors during the discussion.



- Raquel Castillo of SPELL facilitating the third thematic discussion. Dr. Walden Bello, the speaker for the discussion, joined the conference via Zoom.

Jumping off to the discussion, Dr. Bello commenced his presentation on the concept of deglobalization as an alternative economic paradigm. During a past World Social Forum, he, alongside the Focus on the Global South, became associated with the term “deglobalization.” It was initially conceived in a political struggle and was not a neutral term but a vision and strategy. Unlike its current usage describing trends away from globalized production, the term was not meant as a description of empirical reality.

Deglobalization, as presented by Dr. Bello was more than a slogan. It constituted a program with key points such as refocusing the economy on domestic production, subordinating the market to society, emphasizing cooperation over competition, prioritizing social effectiveness over narrow efficiency, and promoting local autonomy. The concept aimed to allow diversity in organizing economies and oppose the imposition of a single mold, namely the neoliberal template. This perspective drew inspiration from the intellectual tradition associated with Karl Polanyi.

In the 1944 book *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi discussed how the unregulated market endorsed by neoliberals resulted from the “disembedding” of the market from the broader social system. This process led market relations to dominate the entire system. However, Polanyi argued that this disembedding was the first phase of a “double movement.” As the disembedded market spiraled out of control, causing significant social crises, the second phase involved society reasserting its supremacy over the market. This re-embedding took the form of strong state intervention, particularly evident after the Great Depression of the 20th century.



■ Dr. Walden Bello presenting his discussion on deglobalization.

Inspired by Karl Polanyi's double movement, Dr. Bello articulated the deglobalization paradigm. Deglobalization calls for a second re-embedding of the market in society following the crisis caused by the unfettered neoliberal market. Rejecting the abolition of the market, deglobalization aims to "re-embed" market relations in society, emphasizing values of community, solidarity, and equality over market efficiency. This vision proposed a shift from the invisible hand to the visible hand of democratic choice and advocated for "effective economics."

As deglobalization evolved, it transformed into a concrete program encompassing activist trade and industrial policies, land and income redistribution, environmental policies, and the creation of a mixed economy involving cooperatives, private enterprises, and state enterprises. Although labeled by some as a noncapitalist or anti-capitalist economy, Dr. Bello sought common ground with emerging paradigms like food sovereignty, ecofeminism, ecosocialism, degrowth, and *buen vivir*.

Post-2010, the public reception of the deglobalization paradigm became more complex. In France, Arnaud Montebourg, a member of the Socialist Party, ran for president under the banner of "*demonialisation*," aligning with Dr. Bello's concept. However, the French far right, led by Marine Le Pen, also embraced deglobalization, blending valid working-class concerns with anti-European Union and anti-immigrant sentiments. This appropriation of deglobalization by the right raised concerns, as themes emphasizing the social good, social protection, and re-embedding the market were utilized within an ideological framework that marginalized certain groups based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or culture.

Dr. Bello observed that deglobalization was being co-opted to legitimize antimigrant politics, with the right appealing to a narrow concept of community based on race and ethnicity. In contrast, he emphasized a progressive interpretation of community centered on shared values that transcend differences. He advocated for an inclusive approach guided by openness and the recognition of fundamental rights for all individuals, including the right to join a desired community.

Deglobalization, initially a theoretical paradigm, found an opportunity for practical application when Pietje Vervest of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam and progressive NGOs in Myanmar invited Dr. Bello to develop an

alternative development plan for the country in 2017. This opportunity arose after the National League for Democracy (NLD) decisively won the national elections in 2015. The established development institutions, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, had already initiated an export-oriented path for Myanmar since 2011, aiming to integrate it into global and regional supply chains. However, skepticism within Myanmar's civil society and the NLD led them to seek an alternative path.

After several visits to Myanmar in 2017 and 2018, Dr. Bello formulated a detailed development strategy that challenged the outward-oriented approach of the development establishment. Instead, it proposed an inward-focused, domestic market-oriented, agriculture-led strategy with industry, trade, and energy development aligned with the needs of the agricultural sector. The goal was to achieve equitably shared prosperity, and balanced development between urban and rural areas, among states, social groups, and ethnic communities. Unlike the top-down approach of the World Bank, the alternative strategy emphasized a participatory democratic process of development from below, with people's organizations, communities, and civil society taking the lead.

Two notable proposals were the adoption of agroecology for smallholder agriculture and the integration of Myanmar's poppy producers into a legal pharmaceutical industry. Agroecology, which relies on natural ecosystems and local knowledge, aims to enhance the sustainability of farming systems. The plan sought to shift poppy producers away from the illegal narcotics trade to become legitimate suppliers of poppy-based medicinal drugs.

However, Dr. Bello shared that the military coup halted the national debate on alternative development strategies in February 2021. Despite the temporary freeze in discourse, the people of Myanmar are expected to overcome the situation. They face an oppressive military regime that had lost control of half the country by mid-2023, potentially leading them to embrace deglobalization.

In summary, Dr. Bello positioned deglobalization within the broader context of alternative economic paradigms, highlighting the vibrant debate evolving over the years. He expressed a commitment to seeking opportunities to translate deglobalization into practical policies that promote equity, sustainability, and community well-being.

Open Forum

Following Dr. Bello's presentation, Raquel proceeded to open the discussion for further questions or takeaways regarding the conceptual framework for an alternative global architecture. Concurrently, Raquel inquired about Dr. Bello's perspectives on significant emerging issues closely tied to global economic architecture and neoliberal globalization, specifically in Southeast Asia. She prompted Dr. Bello to address challenges associated with the promotion of increased free trade, the advocacy for financialization, and the repercussions of digitalization. To provide the audience with valuable insights, she urged him to incorporate these elements into his narrative on globalization.

Dr. Bello highlighted the dominance of neoliberalism throughout the region. He emphasized efforts to remove barriers in international and regional trade, primarily through organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and ASEAN, aiming for free trade integration.

However, Dr. Bello also expressed concern about the negative impacts of this approach, especially on agriculture. Using the example of the Philippines, he pointed out the severe destabilization in the agricultural sector over the last thirty years due to the demands of the WTO. This led to the disintegration of protests and reduction of tariff rates. The primary beneficiaries were transnational corporations.

As Dr. Bello pointed out, nearly all segments of agriculture faced destabilization and penetration by imports. The import penetration ratio, whether in the public or private sectors, was notably high. Dr. Bello highlighted that the Philippines, once a net agricultural surplus exporting country, had transformed into a significant agricultural importing country since 1993. This is one of the many adverse consequences of the trade liberalization policies imposed by international organizations.

Dr. Bello explained that virtually every sector of agriculture in Southeast Asia had been significantly influenced by foreign producers. Even rice, which had resisted for a while, succumbed to liberalization under the Duterte administration in 2019. Rice liberalization resulted in massive price fluctuations and contributed to the overall crisis in the agricultural sector. Studies indicated that rice liberalization would lead to increased poverty among rice farmers. Yet, the government showed limited attention to the issue and lacked real efforts to address the crisis.

Switching to financialization, Dr. Bello highlighted a past effort to liberalize the economy, particularly in the 1990s, leading to a major financial crisis in Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia. The crisis was triggered by the liberalized entry of finance capital and portfolio investments, creating economic distortions, especially in real estate. Despite the purported lessons learned from the Asian financial crisis from 1997 to 1998, Southeast Asian economies continued to remain open to financial flows.

With regard to direct investments, Dr. Bello discussed the role of Japanese investment in the 1990s and early 2000s, emphasizing their strategy of locating suppliers and subsidiaries in different parts of the region. This approach, supported by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB), aimed to integrate countries like the Philippines into the global market with an export-oriented strategy. It focused on creating production bases for exports to Europe and the United States.

Dr. Bello pointed out the recent significant role of Chinese state-backed firms, particularly in investing in infrastructure. These types of companies are often connected to development funding from China. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was a prominent example. It was heavily criticized for destabilizing Southeast Asian economic environments, particularly in the Philippines. The economic strategies that China utilizes shows their real objective—to make Southeast Asian countries dependent towards them.

In the context of Southeast Asian investments, Dr. Bello highlighted the BRI as a major foreign policy and economic initiative by the Chinese government. China had become a primary source of aid and loans for Southeast Asian economies. Although the proportions, compared to funds from institutions like the World Bank or ADB, were not specified, Dr. Bello noted a substantial influence of money from Chinese development banks in the region. Nonetheless, Southeast Asia had not entirely detached itself from development assistance; rather, it had transitioned from one set of actors to another.

Dr. Bello emphasized the need to break away from the integration of Southeast Asian economies into global supply chains. He cited his experience in Myanmar. When Myanmar opened up in 2011, the World Bank aimed to integrate it into the global supply chain, moving away from a domestic-oriented economy.



- Eri Trinurini of ASEC posing a question about the development of inclusive business to Dr. Walden Bello.

Following Dr. Bello's response to Raquel's question, Eri asked about the development of inclusive business, observing its apparent focus on middle and large companies. As defined by the World Bank, inclusive business is a novel business model where supply chains engage local communities, a concept recently introduced in ASEAN. Eri sought Dr. Bello's perspective on whether the emergence of inclusive business signifies a new paradigm shift towards a more socialist form of globalization, or if it is merely an effort to enhance the image of globalization.

As a response, Dr. Bello discussed the widespread use of the term inclusive in various contexts, most especially in *inclusive business*. He was skeptical about reducing reliance on global supply chains. He cited the challenges faced by the United States and Europe in reshoring productive facilities due to the entrenched nature of global supply chains over the past 30 to 35 years.

Dr. Bello also questioned the feasibility of reshoring, noting the difficulties seen in Europe and the United States. Bringing back investments or processes to the home country may encounter obstacles due to established global supply chains alliances. The primary motivation behind internationalizing supply chains has always been profitability. Reversing this trend could pose significant challenges.

Dr. Bello posed the crucial question of whether inclusive business or reshoring would contribute to or detract from profitability. While some corporations have

found that it enhances profitability, he emphasized that without progressive income redistribution policies, the impact of reshoring or inclusive business would be limited. Bringing back supply chains without addressing broader issues like income redistribution, equality, and wealth would not effectively address employment, poverty reduction, and inequality.

Concluding his response, Dr. Bello argued for a comprehensive approach, stating that reshoring or inclusive business must be accompanied by real reform in income redistribution and social conditions. This creates meaningful impact on employment, poverty reduction, and inequality. Therefore, it should be part of a larger process rather than viewed in isolation.

Sastro of KPRI was also concerned about capitalism and its impact on crises like those in Ukraine and Palestine. He highlighted the massive expansion of capital infrastructure projects in Asia, particularly in Indonesia. These projects, facilitated by free trade agreements, pose challenges for social movements and civil society organizations to control. Sastro sought insights on how to influence and control these free trade agreements to benefit the people, especially in former colonial countries like Indonesia.

Additionally, Sastro addressed the bankruptcy of the neoliberal economy, emphasizing the rapid revisions associated with digitalization. He mentioned the transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiated by social movements to the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations and capitalists. Sastro asked for Dr. Bello's perspective on the SDGs, wondering if they genuinely serve the people or if they are mere lip service.

Dr. Bello initially addressed skepticism surrounding the SDGs, noting their tendency to devolve into quantifiable statistical goals rather than facilitating genuine change or reform. He highlighted discrepancies in poverty rates, exemplified by Cambodia's case, where statistical reductions contradicted the real situation observed during his visit.

He illustrated a similar situation in the Philippines. He emphasized that governments might manipulate indicators to showcase progress rather than improve actual conditions related to poverty, inequality, and the environment.

Following Dr. Bello's response, Raquel redirected the discussion to alternative regionalism, economy, and political systems. She asked Dr. Bello about the feasibility of strong state intervention, considering the political landscape in Southeast Asia. Dr. Bello emphasized the need for a third actor, beyond markets and the state, advocating for the crucial role of civil society. In summary, he underscored civil society's significance in ensuring democratic development and pursuing alternative paradigms like regionalism.

In closing off the discussion, Raquel reaffirmed that civil society, people, and communities are essential for fostering an alternative global economic architecture, particularly within individual countries and economies.

Breakout Discussion 3

Raquel then transitioned the session to the group discussions posing the guide question that facilitated the break-out session for the third thematic discussion. The guide question is as follows:

What are one to three strategic tasks and specific practices that communities and movements must prioritize to resist the emerging impacts of neoliberal free trade, financialization, and digitalization on marginalized groups in Southeast Asia?

BREAKOUT GROUP 1

1. Emellia Tamoh (Pemangkin Research Malaysia)
2. Chandy Eng (GADC)
3. Yuli Rustinawati (ASC Indonesia)
4. Jenito Santana (KSI)
5. Carlos Sarmento (UNAER)
6. Mabi David (Good Food Community)
7. Ernesto Priento (HomeNet PH)
8. Elisabeth Lino de Araujo (APHEDA)

Key Strategic Tasks and Alternative Practices

1. Wealth Taxation for Poverty Alleviation

Participants emphasized the urgency of taxing the rich. They advocated the implementation of wealth taxes as a strategic task. Wealth taxes aim to address poverty and reduce inequalities within the countries, creating a more equitable distribution of resources. The discussions underscored the potential impact of redirecting wealth toward social programs that benefit marginalized groups.

2. People-to-People Solidarity Against Neoliberalism

A core alternative practice that surfaced was the fostering of people-to-people solidarity. It is a powerful tool to resist the neoliberal economy. By building connections and alliances among marginalized communities, participants believed that a collective and unified front could be formed. This approach encourages mutual support, resource-sharing, and stronger resistance against neoliberal policies.

3. Knowledge Exchange and Socialist Economy Promotion

Knowledge exchange between communities emerged as a strategic task that empowers local groups with information and insights. Participants discussed the promotion of socialist economic principles as an alternative practice to counter the neoliberal agenda. This involves educating communities about alternative economic models that prioritize social well-being over profit, encouraging the development of local economies.

Additional Alternative Practices

1. Exchange Programs for Cross-Country Learning

Participants emphasized the importance of exchange programs among countries, enabling communities to learn from each other's experiences. These programs can facilitate the transfer of successful strategies and tactics in resisting neoliberal impacts.

2. Coordinated Advocacy for Policy Change

A crucial aspect of the discussion centered on the need for coordinated advocacy efforts. Participants stressed the importance of lobbying for policy changes at the national and regional levels. By aligning their voices, communities and movements can exert pressure on policymakers to adopt more inclusive and socially conscious economic policies.

In summary, the group outlined a detailed approach to counter the negative impact of globalization. These involved prioritizing wealth taxation, promoting people-to-people solidarity, encouraging knowledge exchange, and advocating for socialist economic principles. The integration of local resources and the principles of a social-solidarity economy were identified as key elements in building resilient communities in the face of neoliberal challenges.

BREAKOUT GROUP 2

1. Phoungvyna Sangva (GADC)
2. Raquel Castillo (SPELL)
3. Eri Trinurini Adhi (ASEC Indonesia)
4. Ben Quinones (ASEC)
5. Suntaree Saeng-ging (Homenet Regional)
6. Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
7. Eduardo Tadem (UP CIDS - AltDev)

Participants outlined a comprehensive strategy to resist neoliberalism, especially among marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. Some of the strategies cited were the utilization of local resources, progressive taxation, people-to-people solidarity, political education, and joint advocacy efforts. The emphasis on comprehensive research and alternative fora underscored the commitment to convince

stakeholders that another world, centered around people's development, is not only possible but imperative in reducing inequality.

Key Strategic Tasks and Alternative Practices

1. Utilizing Local Resources and Embracing a Social-Solidarity Economy (SSE)

One of the central themes in the discussion was the importance of utilizing local resources. Participants stressed the need to follow the principles of local economic development and social-solidarity economy. This approach aims to empower communities by leveraging their inherent strengths and fostering a sense of unity to resist external economic pressures.

2. Wealth Redistribution through Progressive Taxation

A critical strategy involves taxing the rich. This strategy would address pervasive inequality, poverty, and economic injustice. Participants emphasized the significance of raising finances through progressive taxation, a means to fund social programs and bridge economic disparities. This approach, if implemented, would ensure a fair distribution of wealth and resources.

3. People-to-People Solidarity and Political Education

People-to-people solidarity emerged as a key alternative practice to resist the influence of what was referred to as new capitalism. Political education at the grassroots level would be a crucial component. This involves educating communities about the issues at hand, promoting socialist economic principles, and empowering them to actively engage in resisting neoliberal policies.

Additional Alternative Practices

1. Exchange Programs and Knowledge Sharing

The group emphasized the importance of exchange programs, field visits, and study exchanges between communities. These initiatives foster cross-cultural learning and the exchange of successful strategies in resisting neoliberal impacts.

2. Comprehensive Research and Joint Advocacy

Participants stressed the need for comprehensive research conducted by each country to understand the nuances of the issues faced. The findings would contribute to the creation of advocacy papers. The group proposed coordinated advocacy among CSOs in each country. This advocacy could hold ministries of commerce accountable, and convince both the government and private sectors that an alternative, people-centered development can effectively reduce inequality.

BREAKOUT GROUP 3

1. Seavmey Ngorn (GADC)
2. Wanun Permpibul (CWT)
3. Ryan Silverio (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus)
4. Hill Encierto (Homenet)
5. Ashley Saxby-Pinkerton (Asia Floor Wage Alliance)
6. Arvin Dimalanta (UP CIDS - AltDev)
7. Corazon Fabros (Stop the War Coalition)

Key Strategic Tasks and Alternative Practices

1. Exposing Purveyors of Free Trade

Participants called for a critical examination of entities promoting free trade, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, ASEAN, and bilateral trade mechanisms within each Southeast Asian country. Participants emphasized the need to expose the impact of these entities on the region, shedding light on the potential pitfalls and challenges posed by free trade agreements.

2. Financial Architecture Reform—Bridgetown Initiative

A significant highlight of the discussion was the proposal put forth by a representative from the government of Barbados, which eventually formed the Bridgetown Initiative. The initiative called for a reform of the financial architecture with specific measures, including debt suspension for countries affected by disasters. The goal was to address the economic fallout resulting from natural disasters, providing affected nations with the financial relief needed for recovery.

Another aspect of the initiative involved enhancing the role of key and emerging countries in contributing to global financing. By fostering collaboration among nations, the Bridgetown Initiative aimed to create a more equitable financial framework that recognized the diverse needs of countries, particularly those vulnerable to economic shocks.

3. Educating Southeast Asian Governments

The participants underscored the importance of educating Southeast Asian governments about the implications of free trade and the benefits of financial reform. They emphasized the need for awareness campaigns, workshops, and

collaborative efforts to enhance the understanding of policymakers regarding the structural issues associated with the existing financial architecture. They saw education as a vital tool to empower governments to make informed decisions that align with the interests of their respective nations.

BREAKOUT GROUP 4

1. Hans Bautista (ICAN)
2. Benjamin Velasco (PM)
3. Agustiana (KPRI)
4. Wira Ginting (AFWA)
5. Ramesh Bhatti (VS)
6. Yuli Riswati (Kabar Bumi)
7. Ruel Punongbayan (11.11.11)

1. Resisting the Race to the Bottom

One of the primary strategic tasks identified was resisting the race to the bottom in labor standards. Instead of downgrading standards, the consensus was to raise them, with a specific emphasis on elevating wages to ensure a livable income for workers. Participants stressed the importance of prioritizing the well-being of the workforce over quantitative outputs, promoting a more humane and sustainable approach to labor practices.

2. Advocating Policies for Well-being

Communities and networks must advocate for policies that prioritize well-being over quantitative outputs. These policies should encompass aspects such as food sufficiency and overall well-being. They should enhance the overall quality of life within communities.

3. National Industrialization for Job Security

National industrialization is crucial for enhancing a country's capacity to develop products and provide job security. The group emphasized the importance of building a robust national economy that can withstand external pressures and ensure employment stability for its citizens.

4. Humanistic and People-Led Processes

Acknowledging the complexity of dismantling capitalism immediately, the group advocated for a shift towards humanistic and people-led processes. The state was identified as a key player in upholding fairness, with an emphasis on community-led practices. The group suggested that local practices should heavily influence policies, and communities should be empowered to emulate these practices.

BREAKOUT GROUP 5

1. Anabel Julian (FDC)
2. Erni Kartini (SPP)
3. Esperanza Santos (Homenet)
4. Ricky Amukti (KPRI)
5. Sastro Mar'uf (KPRI)
6. Thanaraj Murudi (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for SDGs)
7. Lynn Pangilinan (FDC)
8. Josephine Parilla (Homenet PH)

Key Strategic Tasks and Alternative Practices

1. Organizing the Community

A pivotal strategic task identified was the organization of communities to foster a unified stance on specific issues. The group underscored the need for collective action, urging communities to come together and articulate common concerns. The emphasis was on strength in unity, rallying behind shared goals to amplify their impact.

2. Maximizing Local Resources and Services

Communities were encouraged to maximize their local resources and services as a resilient response to external pressures. This involved a commitment to buying and patronizing local products and services, with particular attention to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The group stressed the potential economic strength that lies in grassroots initiatives.

3. Community/People's/Family Bank Formation

The group proposed the establishment of community-based banks, fostering savings and mobilization initiatives. This envisioned people-to-people lending,

potentially organized along sectoral lines. Cooperative formations, whether worker-oriented or otherwise, were discussed as a means to consolidate resources and strengthen financial resilience. Strategies were sought on how to facilitate product exchanges between communities, creating a network that promotes local economic sustainability.

4. Continuing Literacy Programs

Acknowledging the transformative power of knowledge, the discussion emphasized the importance of continuing literacy programs. Digital training, financial education, and other pertinent skills were identified as essential components to empower communities. The group recommended that skilled professionals conduct these programs to ensure a comprehensive and practical approach to literacy.

5. Dialogues with CSOs and Government Agencies

To broaden the impact of community initiatives, participants assessed the need for dialogues with other CSOs and government agencies. The group saw collaborative efforts as integral to amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and garnering support for their causes.

In summary, the discussion concluded on a note of empowerment, with participants committing to implementing the identified strategic tasks. The amalgamation of community organization, resource maximization, continued literacy programs, and engagement with external stakeholders formed a robust framework for resisting the adverse impacts of neoliberal forces.

Thematic Discussion 4: Critique of ACSC/APF as a Platform for Regional Solidarity

■ Chandy Eng

Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia

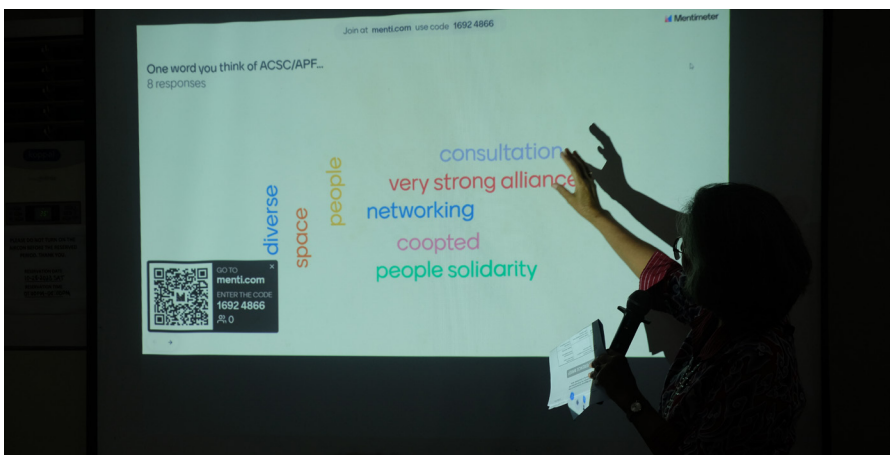
■ Eri Trinurini Adhi

Moderator

Executive Director, Asian Solidarity Economy Council

For the final session, Eri Trinurini Adhi of ASEC, the session facilitator, commenced by surveying attendees' perspectives on ACSC/APF. She gathered responses that included keywords such as consultations, strong alliances, concerns about cooptation, and a focus on people's solidarity.

Following the survey, she introduced Chandy Eng, the designated speaker for the fourth thematic discussion who is also a Cambodian activist and the Executive Director of Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC). Chandy possessed expertise in ACSC, enabling her to explore and discuss critiques and insights regarding the organization. Her background in feminist leadership and gender equality movements also provided valuable context for the discussion.



- Eri presenting the results of the survey regarding participants' perspective on ACSC/APF.



- Chandy Eng of GADC presenting her discussion on the critique of ACSC/APF as a platform for regional solidarity.

Chandy provided an overview of the critique of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference and ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF). Noting the significant participation of the audience in the ACSC/APF, Chandy outlined its role as an annual gathering of civil society in the ASEAN region. According to her, the platform aimed to address cross-cutting issues, formulate joint statements, and submit them to ASEAN leaders through interface meetings. She emphasized the engagement of Southeast Asian CSOs and social movements, representing diverse constituencies including the working class, the peasantry, urban poor, fisherfolk, women, children, the LGBTQIA+ community, Indigenous peoples, older persons, employees, professionals, students, persons with disabilities, and migrants, in the ASEAN process. The hope was for meaningful dialogues, leading to reforms and changes in ASEAN policies and practices.

Chandy also provided a historical background of the ACSC/APF, explaining its origins in the ASEAN Peoples' Festival organized by Cambodian CSOs in 2003. The ACSC was introduced during the 11th ASEAN Summit in 2005 and became an annual gathering. Following the chairpersonship of ASEAN and to accommodate different interpretations from Thai CSOs, APF was added to the event's name in 2009. Chandy also outlined the growth, innovation, dynamism, unity, and occasional division experienced by the ACSC/APF over the years.

Following this, Chandy listed the chronological hosts of ACSC from 2005 to 2023, underscoring key themes and participant numbers. The event evolved from the first ACSC in Shah Alam, Malaysia, with over 120 participants, to the 2023 ACSC with the theme “Reclaiming Safe Space, Restoring Democracy, and Equity in Southeast Asia,” hosted in Indonesia. She emphasized the varied participation numbers, with the highest attendance of 3,000 participants in Yangon, Myanmar in 2014. Notable here are the geographical locations of hosts, such as Timor-Leste and the University of the Philippines. Additionally, the impact of hosting in specific countries, like Myanmar in 2014, where participation was most significant, was highlighted.

Reflecting on the increasing duration of the ACSC/APF over 18 years, Chandy emphasized the growing anticipation and questions about its impact. Quoting the discussion paper from UP CIDS AltDev, Chandy shared a critical perspective. Despite engaging ASEAN governments “since 2005, there has hardly been any progress in making ASEAN recognize civil society’s legitimate concerns.”³ Implementing proposals from the annual summits was also lacking. She noted that ASEAN has displayed a tokenistic attitude towards civil society. She then invited reflections from those who participated in the ACSC/APF, seeking their perspective on whether the statement accurately reflected their experiences over the past eighteen years.



- Suntaree sharing her insights on HomeNet Regional's participation to ACSC/APF.

3 Eduardo Tadem et al., *Deepening Solidarities Beyond Borders Among Southeast Asian Peoples: A Vision for a Peoples' Alternative Regional Integration* (Quezon City: Program on Alternative Development, 2020), p. 6, <https://cids.up.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/UP-CIDS-Discussion-Paper-2020-04.pdf>

Suntaree Saeng-ging of Homenet Southeast Asia shared her experience of actively participating in every ACSC/APF since its inception in Bangkok. She first highlighted the positive impact on informal workers' issues, emphasizing the dual campaigns with both ASEAN governments and CSOs. In her observation, CSOs gained a better understanding of informal workers and their needs over the years. This resulted in stronger networking on social protection. She also expressed satisfaction with engaging the ASEAN Secretariat, particularly in advancing the idea of social protection demands for informal workers.

In response, Chandy acknowledged the positive networking and connections within CSO labor through engagement with the ASEAN secretariat as Saeng-ging highlighted. However, Santana of Kadadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI) expressed a critical perspective, stating that there was a concerning engagement at the ASEAN level. There were no co-opted proposals from CSOs incorporated into ASEAN discussions. The outcome, as Saeng-ging noted, was zero. Wanun Permpibul of Climate Watch Thailand further underscored the negative impact of the ASEAN discussion. She described it as a *minus* since ASEAN began using the concept of inclusivity without recognizing the efforts of CSOs. Chandy prompted the audience to contemplate the length and visibility of conference statements, raising questions about where these statements could be found. The audience then suggested websites as potential sources.

However, Chandy raised concerns about the accessibility of the ACSC/APF statement and emphasized the need for statements to be comprehensible for all CSOs and Southeast Asian people, especially those who may not be proficient in English. She also raised the issue of the exclusive focus on ASEAN through the name "ACSC/ASEAN People Forum," highlighting the oversight of people who are not part of ASEAN such as stateless individuals in Southeast Asia and Vietnamese people in Cambodia. On another note, she expressed appreciation for MASSA because this is where it differs from ASEAN—MASSA discusses the diverse status of Southeast Asian people and Asian movements.

Another point that Chandy discussed was the difficulty of consulting with ASEAN representatives. She reflected on the ten-year review of ACSC/APF, noting the initial hope for an interaction with ASEAN heads of state to present civil society concerns, which only occurred once in 2005. From 2006 to 2009, connections with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were established, but in the last decade (from 2015 onward), it became challenging to engage with ASEAN representatives directly.

She highlighted the issues surrounding the 2009 interface in Thailand, including the rejection of civil society representatives from Burma/Myanmar and Cambodia. The second interface in 2009 marked a shift, with the attendance of ASEAN Heads of State becoming informal and voluntary rather than compulsory.

Following this, Chandy raised concerns about the lack of follow-up and monitoring of conference statements. She noted that statements from different years tend to be similar, lacking an in-depth study and follow-up. She also discussed the challenges regarding the bureaucratic processes within one's respective country, particularly the financial difficulties faced by CSOs in undertaking the whole implementation process beyond the annual attendance on ACSC/APFs.

Chandy also expressed the need for a more democratic process in country fora, highlighting her own experience of being selected rather than elected to a committee. Additionally, she mentioned the importance of preliminary fora like the Cambodian People Forum to gather information about the situation in Cambodia before participating in the ASEAN People Forum.

Chandy further underscored the concerns about resources, financial accountability, and transparency within the ACSC/APF. She referred to a five-year review report covering 2009 to 2015. This report raised questions about the ACSC/APF's ability to maintain independence and resistance to compromised decision-making, especially given financial support from host governments. For instance, while financial reports were audited for certain years, issues arose, such as funds intended for civil society being channeled to government-related entities. The lack of guiding principles on financial resources, accountability, and transparency was identified as a broader concern.

Chandy also cited examples from hosts and secretariats in Cambodia (2012) and Thailand (2019), where parallel ACSC/APF events were organized alongside government-led counterparts. She noted the blockage of CSO participation exemplified by incidents like the banning of Laos CSOs from entering Cambodia in 2012 and travel restrictions on Vietnamese activists in 2015. In some instances, CSO host organizations blocked certain agenda, as seen in Brunei in 2013 when LGBTQIA+ issues were obstructed during the ACSC/APF due to the local civil society's structured agenda.

Furthermore, Chandy addressed the issue of government-organized nongovernment organizations (GONGOs) in the ACSC/APF. She highlighted concerns about government-affiliated civil society groups having a more significant influence than neutral civil society organizations. She also critiqued the issues of language and inclusivity, emphasizing the dominance of English that could exclude participants who are unable to understand the language. She expressed concerns about the lack of translation into local languages, which can hinder accessibility for grassroots movements, Indigenous peoples, and individuals with disabilities.

Despite these critiques, Chandy acknowledged a sense of hope since the previous year saw a contextualization and analysis of the ACSC/APF, prompting reflection on ASEAN's shortcomings and discussions on potential actions. To conclude the session, she pointed to the 18 years of experience with ASEAN and highlighted the opportunity to diversify grassroots efforts, enhance communication, and expand civic spaces.

Open Forum

Dr. Tadem additionally emphasized the importance of understanding how ASEAN officially views civil society. He used two key documents, one from the ASEAN Secretariat and the other related to ASEAN's three pillars, particularly in the sociocultural field. He pointed out that according to these documents, ASEAN defines civil society as groups adhering to its vision and implementing its programs. This perspective inhibits the recognition of civil society as independent, autonomous, and capable of having differing views from ASEAN. He underscored the need to address this distorted definition for more meaningful engagement between civil society and ASEAN.

Agustiana of Serikat Petani Pasundan⁴ (SPP) reflected on the development of the Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia⁵ (KPRI) movement and its distinctive characteristics in comparison to MASSA. Recalling six meetings and

4 Serikat Petani Pasundan translates to "Pasundan Farmers' Union."

5 Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia translates to "Confederation of Indonesian People's Movements."

the involvement of individuals from ASEAN in their organization, Agustiana recognized the potential for solidarity and comradeship. The experiences gained from interactions with SPP and KPRI visits inspired them to envision a positive impact on both people and the planet.

The values embraced and the enrichment experienced, coupled with the emotional connections forged, contributed to the vibrant brotherhood within the movement. Agustiana emphasized that unity was not merely an idea but a reality evident and rooted in their shared history.

Despite facing challenges, including the experience of fatigue consolidating the three coalitions, Agustiana noted that the movement remained resilient and endearing. The once-small movement has transformed into a larger, flourishing community. Agustiana expressed optimism about the future, highlighting the importance of the old members' health and their role in inspiring the younger generation.

Yuli Rustinawati, representing the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus Indonesia (ASC Indonesia) in ASEAN, faced challenges introducing their group in regional forums. Attempts to establish their presence were not universally successful, and participation in events like the ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF) raised concerns due to regulatory challenges in certain countries. Despite obstacles, their participation held value as it fostered solidarity within the group. In instances of threats, whether from the government or ASEAN, the group displayed a collective reaction and support mechanisms. However, the ASEAN Secretariat did not permit the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus to be part of certain discussions.

Reflecting on their solidarity, language barriers emerged as a significant obstacle, as none of the members had English as their first language. Hosting the APF in their country facilitated inclusion, but crossing borders became financially challenging. Instances of government restrictions, such as in Brunei, where individuals were barred from entry, highlighted the need for APF to be more than just an advocacy platform. Yuli emphasized the significance of having a space for building connections, understanding each other, and offering support in the face of threats from ASEAN or governments.

Breakout Session 4

Following the open forum, Eri proceeded to open the guide question to facilitate the last break-out discussion:

While improving the governance and outreach of ACSC/APF might require time and effort from Southeast Asian CSOs, what short-term actions can be taken by alternative regionalism supported by MASSA to make the outcome of its convergence more useful? How can we measure it?

BREAKOUT GROUPS 1 AND 2

1. Phoungvyna Sangva (GADC)
2. Chandy Eng (GADC)
3. Raquel Castillo (SPELL)
4. Elisabeth Lino de Araujo (APHEDA)
5. Eri Trinurini Adhi (ASEC Indonesia)
6. Ben Quiñones (ASEC)
7. Suntaree Saeng-ging (Homenet Regional)
8. Ernesto Prieto (Homenet Philippines)
9. Rene Ofreneo (FDC)
10. Mabi David (GoodFood Community)
11. Angeli Lacson (GoodFood Community)
12. Yuli Rustinawati (Kabar Bumi)
13. Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
14. Eduardo Tadem (UP CIDS AltDev)

Immediate Objectives

1. Activation of In-Country People's Forums

The group emphasized the importance of activating in-country people's fora as a potent tool for gathering real-time issues. The focus was on enhancing effectiveness, mobilization, and organization. This could ensure that a diverse array of concerns from each country can be brought to the forefront during regional discussions.

2. Prioritization of MASSA Issues

ACSC/APF needs to identify and prioritize key issues from MASSA. By establishing clear objectives and outlining specific challenges, the steering committee could streamline efforts and address concerns more effectively. This would lead to targeted and impactful outcomes.

3. Seamless Transition between Hosts

To maintain momentum, the group stressed the significance of fostering a close connection between the previous host and the next host. This collaborative approach aimed to ensure the continuity of work. They can capitalize on shared insights and facilitate a smooth handover. The idea was to create a collaborative bridge that propels the alliance and solidarity forward.

4. Strategic Budget Utilization

The group stressed the importance of effectively using available budgets and addressing the hangover of funds to ensure continuity into the next year. This strategic approach aimed to maximize the impact of financial resources, aligning them with the identified priorities and objectives.

5. On Measuring Success

The discussion extended beyond strategic tasks to deliberate on how success could be measured within the short term. A consensus emerged on the following indicators:

a. Increased Participation in People's Forums

The success of in-country people's fora could be measured by the increased participation, engagement, and diversity of issues brought forward. A vibrant and active forum would signify a successful mobilization effort.

b. Addressing Priority Issues Timely

The steering committee's ability to timely address and provide solutions to the prioritized issues from MASSA would serve as a clear indicator of the convergence's impact and effectiveness.

c. Smooth Transition and Collaboration between Hosts

The seamless transition between the previous and next hosts, coupled with continued collaboration, would signify success in maintaining the alliance's momentum.

d. Strategic Budget Allocation and Utilization

Success would be measured by the efficient utilization of available budgets, ensuring that resources are allocated to key priorities and contributing to tangible outcomes.

BREAKOUT GROUP 3

1. Seavmey Ngorn (GADC)
2. Wanun Permpibul (CWT)
3. Ryan Silverio (ASEAN SOGIE Caucus)
4. Hill Encierto (Homenet)
5. Ashley Saxby-Pinkerton (AFWA)
6. Corazon Fabros (Stop the War Coalition)
7. Arvin Dimalanta (UP CIDS - AltDev)

The group's discussion focused on making the outcomes of the convergence more effective and measurable.

On Short-Term Strategies

1. Analysis and Monitoring

Participants acknowledged that improving the governance and outreach of ACSC/APF required sustained efforts. However, in the short term, MASSA could play a pivotal role by offering critical analysis and monitoring the statements emanating from the convergence. This involved identifying gaps, areas of improvement, and critiques, which could be constructively feedback into ACSC/APF. Active participation in committees and collaborative coordination were seen as key elements in this process.

2. Going Beyond the Forum

The discussion emphasized that ACSC/APF should evolve beyond being a mere event. It should transform into a continuous process. MASSA, in its supportive role, could facilitate post-forum dialogues. These dialogues were envisioned as essential spaces for those who could not participate fully during the forum or for internal discussions among MASSA members. This approach sought to extend the impact of the convergence, fostering ongoing engagement and dialogue.

On Measuring Impact

1. Participation in Committees

Success in the short term could be measured by increased participation in ACSC/APF committees by MASSA members. This indicated a proactive involvement in the governance and organization of the convergence, showcasing a heightened sense of ownership.

2. Constructive Analysis and Critique

The quality of MASSA's analysis and critique could gauge the effectiveness of the organization's role. A thorough examination of statements and proceedings, coupled with constructive feedback, would reflect the alliance's commitment to enhancing ACSC/APF's impact.

3. Post-Forum Dialogues

The success of MASSA's initiative to host post-forum dialogues would be evident in the level of participation and the richness of discussions. These dialogues aimed to bridge gaps, extend the reach of the convergence, and maintain a continuous discussion of pertinent issues.

The table discussion concluded with a collective understanding. While long-term improvements in ACSC/APF governance would require sustained efforts, short-term strategies driven by MASSA could significantly contribute to making the convergence more impactful. The emphasis on active participation, critical analysis, and post-forum dialogues underscored the alliance's commitment to influencing positive change within the ASEAN civil society landscape.

BREAKOUT GROUP 4

1. Benjamin Velasco (PM)
2. Wira Ginting (AFWA)
3. Yuli Riswati (Kabar Bumi)
4. Erni Kartini (SPP)
5. Ramesh Bhatti (Vikalp Sangam)
6. Agustiana (SPP)
7. Ruel Punongbayan (11.11.11)

On Short-Term Strategies

1. Strengthening MASSA's Internal Dynamics

The group highlighted the need to fortify MASSA's internal structure. Acknowledging that governance improvements in ACSC/APF might necessitate time, the group emphasized immediate actions within MASSA. The collective sentiment was to encourage experimentation and ongoing testing of methods to consolidate and engage people effectively.

2. Cross-Country Capacity Building

Leveraging the rich grassroots initiatives in the Philippines and Indonesia, the discussion underscored the importance of fine-tuning and capacitating each other within MASSA. Scholars working closely with grassroots movements could contribute significantly to building a collective understanding. The goal was to ensure that each country's delegation to ASEAN events complements the overarching goals of the alliance.

3. People-to-People Exchange

The group identified promoting people-to-people exchange and learning from direct experiences as pivotal strategies. By comprehending the contextual intricacies of affected communities, collaboration would naturally flourish. This approach aimed to intensify involvement, fostering sustainable dialogue and cooperation among diverse stakeholders.

4. Showcasing MASSA at ACSC/APF

Recognizing the potential of ACSC/APF as a platform, participants suggested utilizing this forum to promote MASSA. Strengthening the movement involved actively participating in the convergence, engaging with stakeholders, and showcasing the alliance's principles and initiatives.

On Measurement Parameters

1. MASSA Involvement Metrics

A tangible measure of success in the short term would be an increase in MASSA's active involvement. This could be gauged by the level of participation, membership growth, and the dynamism within the alliance.

2. Experimentation and Learning Outcomes

The success of internal experimentation within MASSA could be measured by learning outcomes and the adoption of effective methods. Experimentation

aimed to optimize approaches for consolidating people and fostering meaningful engagement.

3. Visibility and Influence at ACSC/APF

The impact of showcasing MASSA at ACSC/APF could be measured by its visibility and influence within the convergence. Positive reception, increased awareness, and engagement with other CSOs and stakeholders would signify success.

4. Milestones Identification and Advocacy Strategy

An important proposal is to identify milestones for MASSA within ACSC/APF and develop a strategy for ACSC/APF, forcing governments to listen. This involves setting clear objectives and formulating advocacy strategies to amplify the alliance's voice.

Overall, the consensus was that by fortifying internal structures, fostering cross-country collaboration, and actively participating in ACSC/APF, MASSA could significantly contribute to reshaping the regional narrative in favor of social solidarity and people-centric governance.

BREAKOUT GROUP 5

1. Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
2. Lynn Pangilinan (FDC)
3. Josephine Parilla (Homenet Philippines)
4. Ricky Amukti (KPRI)
5. Anwar Sastro Mar'uf (KPRI)
6. Thanaraj Murudi (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for SDGs)

On Immediate Strategies

1. Strengthen Grassroots Voice and Collaboration

The group underscored the necessity to strengthen the impact and cooperation of grassroots movements, such as farmers' groups. The objective was to encourage more profound involvement and representation, leading to tangible transformations at the grassroots level.

2. Reposition Leadership and Vision

Participants stressed the importance of repositioning leadership to include more representatives from grassroots movements. This involved challenging the dominance of NGOs within ACSC/APF. Key attributes for leadership included having clear vision, transparency, and the willingness to openly accept and address criticisms. Establishing mechanisms to measure these attributes was identified as a crucial step.

3. Expand Spaces for Grassroots Involvement

In addressing skewed representation, the group called for an expansion of spaces dedicated to grassroots involvement. This involved actively establishing opportunities for grassroots movements to contribute, share, and shape the discourse within ACSC/APF.

4. Diversify Spotlight Issues

The group also suggested spreading attention across various issues, rather than focusing solely on one. This would necessitate a diversified agenda, ensuring that recommendations for issues, particularly those that concern indigenous peoples, are accorded equal priority.

5. Quantify Progress through Inventories

A pragmatic approach to measuring progress involves conducting inventories to quantify the participation of organizations and individuals within ACSC/APF. This systematic approach aims to create a tangible measure of the alliance's growth and engagement.

6. Establish Country-Specific Secretariats

To enhance the efficiency of coordination, the group proposed the establishment of dedicated secretariats for each country. This decentralized structure aimed to streamline communication, ensuring a more inclusive and responsive approach to regional issues.

7. Working Groups for Specific Issues

A concrete suggestion emerged regarding the formation of working groups dedicated to addressing specific issues. By establishing specialized groups, nuanced problems could be effectively tackled, and inclusivity could be assured.

On Measuring Impact

1. Grassroots Participation Metrics

The success of these strategies would be measured by the increased participation of grassroots movements within ACSC/APF. Metrics included the quantity and quality of engagement, reflecting a more inclusive and representative convergence.

2. Leadership Accountability Metrics

Metrics for leadership accountability would revolve around the transparent acceptance and incorporation of criticisms. The openness of leaders to grassroots perspectives and their ability to steer the convergence effectively would serve as critical indicators.

3. Inventory Progress Metrics

Inventories tracking organizational and individual participation would offer quantifiable data, enabling the measurement of MASSA's progress within ACSC/APF over time.

4. Issue Diversification Metrics

The success of diversifying spotlight issues would be measured by the balanced prioritization of recommendations across various concerns, ensuring that no specific issue dominated the discourse.

Overall, the table discussion featured the pivotal role of grassroots movements in reshaping the narrative of regional convergence through ACSC/APF. The proposed strategies, coupled with tangible metrics, provided a roadmap for MASSA to effectively influence and transform the regional discourse in the short term.

To conclude the first day of the conference, participants engaged in expressing their solidarity through messages and performances, ending the day marked by a sense of hope and happiness.



- Participants of Day 1 of the 4th MASSA Conference gathered in front of the University Hotel of the University of the Philippines Diliman. The conference drew more than forty representatives from twenty people's organizations (POs), social movements, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) across Southeast Asia, with the special participation of a representative of Vikalp Sangam of India, a partner of MASSA through the Global Tapestry of Alternatives (GTA).

Day Two

31 October 2023

Synthesis and Processing of the Four Thematic Discussions

- **Eri Trinurini Adhi**
Asian Solidarity Economy Council
- **Raquel Castillo**
Solidarity for People's Education and Lifelong Learning

Starting the second day of the conference, Eri Trinurini Adhi of ASEC and Raquel Castillo of SPELL provided a recap and synthesis of the four thematic discussions presented on the first day.

Eri began the discussion by recapping the significant points made by Dr. Ben Quiñones in the keynote address. She emphasized the support of the University of the Philippines for the regional movement and delved into the essence of MASSA as a grassroots people's organization. She asked the participants to reflect on their involvement with MASSA and its role in shaping a regional integration model from the bottom, contrasting with the top-down approaches from entities like ASEAN and OECD.

Eri then stressed the importance of understanding alternative in the context of resistance and nonmainstream development in Southeast Asia. She emphasized that MASSA operates on the ground and embodies nonmainstream principles. Dr. Quiñones, during his keynote address, outlined the core values that should guide the regional alternative movement that focuses on the principle of social solidarity economy (SSE). The identified values include:

1. The primacy of people and planet over capital and profit;
2. Engagement of organized groups in wealth creation and equitable distribution;
3. Mutual aid;
4. Democratic/participatory governance;
5. Voluntary cooperation; and
6. Independence and autonomy.



- Eri kicking off the second day of the conference by summarizing the rich discussions and insights from Day 1.

Eri underscored the practical implementation of these values as practitioners rather than theoretical concepts, positioning MASSA as the heart of the network in promoting alternative regionalism.

Following this, Eri highlighted the contributions of the four resource persons from the previous day. She started with Dr. Bello's insights into the impact of free trade agreements, financial capital, and digitalization. Wira Ginting from AFWA added to the discussion the need to challenge globalization with deglobalization, focusing on local production's detachment from the global supply chain and the importance of collaboration, solidarity, and alternative production methods.

Eri then illustrated the strategic tasks for MASSA, whose participants grappled with the challenge of dismantling capitalism, and discussed the role of the state in promoting fairness. Her discussion emphasized community-led practices. The following key actions for MASSA emerged:

1. Advocating for policies that prioritize well-being and food sufficiency over quantitative growth;
2. Urging the government to implement progressive taxation, address inequality, and collaborate on common issues with movements in the Global South;
3. Using best practices as an advocacy tool for the Ministry of Commerce, relying on evidence rather than concepts;
4. Advocating for the reform of financial architecture, including the suspension of countries' debts; and
5. Supporting national industrialization to enhance the country's capacity for product development, job security, and competitiveness in the face of imports.

These recommendations were the result of group discussions on the challenges posed by free trade agreements.

Recapping the last thematic discussion with Chandy Eng, Eri presented a comprehensive critique of ACSC/APF, reviewing its history and structure to benefit participants who had not attended before. The critique highlighted issues such as the lack of budget transparency, a limited interface with the ASEAN Secretariat, disparities in joint statements, and the complexity of working with ASEAN due to language differences among the eleven member countries.

She then explained the factors why the ASEAN Secretariat does not provide a space for social dialogue. This is because CSOs are defined differently in ASEAN's formal documents. ASEAN views CSOs as NGOs implementing the organization's vision and programs. Despite these limitations, ACSC was credited with raising awareness about the LGBTQIA+ and the informal workers among CSOs. The

presentation acknowledged the positive shift in addressing LGBTQIA+ issues as cross-cutting concerns rather than sideline topics.

Building on this, Eri stressed the importance of formulating a clear objective and setting measurable milestones for the MASSA action plan. The highlighted the need to activate countries' people's fora aligned with the principle of bottom-up solidarity. Connecting national and regional issues was also highlighted.

Eri's presentation concluded with laying out the collective task for civil society. She called CSOs to actively promote an alternative and people-led regionalism that is grounded on the alternative practices of Southeast Asian peoples. She also pointed out that CSOs should lessen their focus on engaging with ASEAN governments, considering the failed interface and dialogues of the previous years.

To synthesize and recap the last two thematic discussions, Raquel Castillo presented an overview of key points. Among these points were the learnings from the session speakers on the US-China rivalry and the critique of ASEAN. Likewise, the thematic area of advocacy like food, environment, and just transitions.

Two main learnings emerged from the discussions on the US-China rivalry and the critique of ASEAN. First, the discussions examined ASEAN's management of its self-defined mission and revealed its limitations and possibilities. Though ASEAN declared a commitment to human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and good governance, its inaction and passivity, rooted in the principle of non-interference, raised questions about its effectiveness. Cases in point included the Myanmar crisis, South China Sea disputes, and the Mekong River's impact on livelihoods.

Second, the issue of ASEAN's limited ability to address geopolitical challenges in the region, resulting in an escalation of peace and security threats. Raquel highlighted a potential stalemate between the United States and China, prompting considerations for an alternative regional formation, albeit state-led solutions. Raquel posed the question: *Should efforts be focused on reforming ASEAN or advocating for a new formation?* Prof. de Dios noted the absence of a current alternative formation.

Raquel reiterated Eri's emphasis on the crucial role of CSOs, movements, and landscape actors in shaping geopolitical contexts and determining a regional formation aligned with their vision and principles. In the subsequent discussions, participants acknowledged the varying capacities of organizations to engage at this level. The consensus was to collaborate with those who could enhance understanding, including academics, research institutions, and other sectors, even considering collaboration with nationalist businessmen.

Furthermore, Raquel underscored the need for a progressive movement to adopt an independent and critical stance in the US–China rivalry. Rather than aligning exclusively with either side, the goal is to leverage rivalries and unite like-minded organizations. The objective is to advocate for alternative regionalism from below, aligning with the strategic tasks for MASSA.

Following these discussions, Raquel presented the thematic area of advocacy, focusing on food, the environment, and just transitions. The discussion primarily centered on two key aspects. The discussion first examined the impacts of climate change, emphasizing the need to hold certain actors accountable. Raquel pointed out that extreme climate events should not be considered natural. Instead, these should be attributed to human activities, especially as large investments such as corporate entities and funds have promoted unregulated economic growth. The discussion emphasized that marginalized communities and workers are victims rather than culprits.

The second part delved into the historical and systemic roots of the climate crisis. It connected it to the impact of colonization, capitalism, industrialization, unregulated production and consumption for profit to the Southeast Asian peoples, as well as marginalized communities. False climate solutions were also mentioned. Burden is placed on marginalized and working people while governments and corporations imposed inadequate solutions.

A key conclusion was the call to resist false climate solutions, emphasizing the importance of giving voice to marginalized communities, particularly working people. Castillo referred to a quote from Dr. Bello's presentation, "The invisible hand of the common good must go hand in hand with the invisible hand of democratic choice." This underscored the importance of finding a collective voice and actively participating in inclusive governance.

Keynote Address: Why MASSA?

■ Professor Emeritus Eduardo Tadem

*Convenor, Program on Alternative Development
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies*

Subsequently, Asst. Prof. Sy outlined the second day's agenda. He emphasized the importance of the meeting to fortify and empower MASSA. This included the identification of various issues, groups, and projects for collaboration within MASSA. Following this, subsequent discussions were slated to explore the organizational structure of MASSA and deliberate on strategies essential for the mobilization of resources and the attraction of potential funders.

To provide further understanding and context for the movement's purpose, Dr. Tadem delivered his keynote address, "Why MASSA?"

Dr. Eduardo Tadem started his presentation by clarifying that his discussion would supplement Dr. Ben Quiñones' keynote address. He would be answering and detailing the question of what form and structure alternative regionalism would take, as well as elaborating on the vision of alternative regionalism in its concrete form.



■ Dr. Tadem delivering his keynote address on 'Why MASSA?'

To provide context, Dr. Tadem first detailed a comprehensive overview of global regional organizations, encompassing both traditional and nontraditional entities. He listed examples such as ASEAN, APEC, NAFTA, the European Union, SARC, the African Union, the Arab League, MERC, and Mercosur in Latin America. Despite their diversity, these organizations generally adhered to a neoliberal vision involving trade and various exchanges across political, cultural, and economic dimensions.

Dr. Tadem underscored the proliferation of regional organizations globally, highlighting a lack of coordination and coherence among them. Within ASEAN, he pointed out the presence of subregional organizations like the SIJORI trade organization, the Mindanao Indonesia subregional organization, and the Mekong.

Introducing nontraditional models, he discussed ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), formed in 1991 by Venezuela and Cuba. Comprising socialist and social democratic governments in Latin America, ALBA prioritizes social welfare over economic exchange, utilizing barter trade and mutual economic aid.

Dr. Tadem further detailed the current members of ALBA, including Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Dominica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Santa Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as Suriname. He mentioned Ecuador's previous membership and subsequent departure due to a change in government. Given this, Dr. Tadem emphasized that both traditional and nontraditional regional organizations are state-led. He also pointed out that governments predominantly manage programs, budgets, and policymaking. Even in the case of ALBA, people's organizations and civil society have limited involvement in policy development. ALBA has encountered challenges due to the US blockade on Cuba and the embargo on Venezuela.

Subsequently, Dr. Tadem directed attention to the existing vision and discussion paper titled "Vision of a Southeast Asian Peoples Regional Integration." He emphasized the distinction between this grassroots-oriented regional integration—an integration from below—and other state-led models that operate from above. He stressed that this alternative regionalism was not something to be developed but rather discovered and documented since it is already practiced by Southeast Asian peoples. These practices, rooted in the political, economic, and cultural aspects of grassroots, communities, and marginalized sectors, have been in existence for centuries.

Dr. Tadem also underscored that the foundation of this alternative regionalism lies in the resistance and nonmainstream development practices observed among Southeast Asian peoples on the ground. Guided by principles such as cooperation, popular participation, solidarity, mutual benefit, the commons principle, and joint development, this approach aligns with the values articulated by Dr. Ben Quiñones, including the crucial principle of autonomy. Dr. Tadem clarified autonomy as subsidiarity, emphasizing that if tasks can be handled at the local level, national intervention becomes unnecessary. The principle of subsidiarity underscores the autonomy of local organizations and communities, allowing them to manage their affairs independently.

Given this, Dr. Tadem examined the necessity of a regional network in the context of existing popular initiatives and grassroots practices. He posed the question of the role of initiatives in crafting an alternative peoples' regionalism model, especially led by civil society and movement-based networks. The answer, he explained, lies in addressing the deficiencies of these popular initiatives:

1. **Networking.** Many local and national groups are disparate and disconnected from each other. Dr. Tadem emphasized the need for regional solidarity, where groups across countries can exchange information, enhance capabilities, and work together.
2. **Research and Documentation.** Research, documentation, and constant monitoring of popular initiatives are lacking. Dr. Tadem stressed the importance of building a comprehensive database, examining practices, identifying best features, and pointing out inadequacies. Thorough research and meticulous documentation are critical for further development.
3. **Mainstreaming Alternatives.** These practices are often viewed as marginal or even "elitist" because they remain standalone or at the pioneering stage. The challenge is to mainstream these innovative practices by bringing together grassroots organizations, local communities, civil society groups, and social movements in information and advocacy campaigns.
4. **Abstracting and Making Sense of Alternatives.** Making sense of the practices and understanding the long-term vision is the fourth and most important gap. Dr. Tadem emphasized the need to distill the rich empirical data from popular practices, subject it to rigorous comparisons, and conceptualize it

into a new paradigm, narrative, framework, theory, and guide to action. This reflexive and continuous process addresses the evolving nature of human actions and practices, constituting the fourth crucial gap to be filled.

Dr. Tadem acknowledged the long-term nature of these gaps and the ongoing process of examining and reexamining theories. These four gaps collectively form the framework for addressing alternative practices and cultivating an alternative people's regionalism.

Moving forward, Dr. Tadem highlighted the establishment of MASSA in 2022 after five years of discussions and three regional conferences—in 2018, in 2019, and in 2020. Currently, MASSA comprises twenty-three civil society and grassroots partners and networks from various Southeast Asian countries.

Dr. Tadem also presented the proposed priorities for MASSA. These he noted, were works in progress and subject to finalization after the conference:

1. ***Expanding the Database.*** Document alternative practices across the region and potentially beyond, building on the current database of around 60 documented and published practices.
2. ***Strengthen the Movement.*** Enhance the movement through knowledge-sharing initiatives, network-building activities, and regional solidarity actions.
3. ***Engaging with Networks.*** Maintain engagement with regional and global networks and spaces to support discourse on alternatives and alternative regionalism.

Dr. Tadem clarified that MASSA would continue its involvement with ACSC/APF, emphasizing the complementary nature of their work and the support received through a 2020 resolution adopted in Vietnam. He concluded by expressing gratitude for the adoption of the resolution by ACSC/APF, highlighting the clear mandate supporting the development of an alternative people's regional integration model based on the practices of the people.

Open Forum

Anwar Sastro Ma'ruf of KPRI initiated the discussion by emphasizing the need for research into the complex aspects of ASEAN's regionalism. According to him, this could be done by tracing the origins of ASEAN's vision and concept. He also highlighted positive examples of regionalism, citing the 1955 Asian–African conference in Bandung, Indonesia as crucial for reflection.



■ Sastro of KPRI initiating the discussion on ASEAN's regionalism.

Following this, Ryan Silverio from ASEAN SOGIE Caucus raised a concern about shrinking civic spaces in Southeast Asia, particularly affecting the LGBTQIA+ sector. He proposed the idea of identifying and creating safe spaces for activists, citing Taiwan as a potential example due to its shared threat from China and historical connections with Southeast Asia's Austronesian Indigenous peoples.

Agustiana agreed with Ryan's concerns and stressed that MASSA, as a new force against neoliberalism, should go beyond this rhetoric and take concrete actions. He emphasized the importance of people-to-people connections in Southeast Asia, noting that MASSA, unique for its diverse origins, involves activists and academics consistently fighting for justice.



- Ryan expressing concerns about the shrinking spaces in Southeast Asia and its impact on the LGBTQIA+ community.



- Ramesh Bhatti of Vikalp Sangam inquiring about VS membership to MASSA.

Ramesh Bhatti from Vikalp Sangam also inquired about the absence of Vikalp Sangam from the list of MASSA members. He asked about the possibility of its inclusion in the MASSA campaign.

In response to Sastro's question that delved into the historical narratives of regional organizations, like the Bandung Conference, Dr. Tadem noted that these

organizations, including Bandung, shared the characteristic of being state-led initiatives, organized and managed by governments. While Bandung presented a good vision, it remained a dream, and subsequent efforts, such as the Non-Aligned movement, lacked cohesion among member countries.

Dr. Tadem also emphasized that most historical regional organizations resulted from invasions and occupations by imperialist powers, representing forced regional integration. In contrast, MASSA stands out as a different model—a regional integration initiated from below, organized by the masses, and not led by the state. The distinction lies in MASSA's grassroots approach, diverging from the state-centric nature of traditional regional organizations.

Following this, Dr. Tadem responded to Ryan's question about creating safe spaces by introducing the concept of state spaces and nonstate spaces. Referring to the work of scholar James C. Scott, Dr. Tadem explained that state spaces are areas where the state holds supreme authority, while nonstate spaces are places where the role of the state is diminished or marginalized. These nonstate spaces, which can be found in both rural and urban areas, empower the local communities and people within them.

Dr. Tadem elaborated on Scott's identification of a vast nonstate area called Zomia in mainland Southeast Asia, primarily composed of highland communities inaccessible to the state. Dr. Tadem illustrated a vivid picture of this hilly region and explained why civilization struggles to climb hills, citing Scott's metaphor. He then extended and applied the concept to urban areas like Manila, highlighting Tondo as an illustration of a nonstate space where the state hesitates to intervene due to the dominance of local gangs and armed groups.

While Dr. Tadem acknowledged the concerns regarding the potential misuse of nonstate spaces by criminal elements, he also emphasized the positive side. He pointed out that these areas foster the growth of people's organizations, as seen in Tondo, Manila. The discussion aimed to provide insights into the intricate dynamics of state and nonstate spaces in different environments.

In response to Agustiana's point, Dr. Tadem expressed his agreement and appreciation for Agustiana's positive evaluation of MASSA and its potential impact. While uncertain about MASSA becoming a dominant force in regional development in the next two years, the significance of collective efforts is needed

to concretize their vision. He clarified that MASSA's opposition to neoliberalism does not mean endorsing the neoclassical type of capitalism. He then highlighted the dual nature of capitalism, pointing out the existence of state-led capitalism, as observed in Japan and South Korea.

Addressing the concern of Vikalp Sangam, Dr. Tadem indicated that they are already members. They collaborated over the past year with Ashish Kothari of Vikalp Sangam.

Breakout Session

Identification of MASSA's Specific Priority Issues and Identification of Possible Projects

Transitioning to the next session of the conference, Asst. Prof. Sy proceeded with the breakout session aimed at identifying specific priority issues and potential projects for MASSA in the coming years. The discussion revolved around the nine-point program below:

1. Coordinating the interactions between the alternative practices;
2. Convening and organizing conferences and workshops for the groups and communities involved in alternative practices;
3. Researching and documenting alternative practices and building a database;
4. Conducting alternative learning and training programs based on grassroots needs;
5. Conceptualizing and making sense of the practices and developing new paradigms and strategies of development;
6. Mobilizing alternative practices, regional interactions, and communities, and organizing joint actions and initiatives;
7. Promoting the replication of the alternative practices in order to mainstream them;

8. Establishing a regional mechanism at the civil society level that is based on the interactions and cooperative practices between these alternative practices; and
9. Establishing alternative regional structures that are decentralized and creative where different tasks and responsibilities are distributed throughout the region and rotated regularly.

BREAKOUT GROUP 1

Moderator and Presenter: Angging Aban (AltDev)

Group Members:

1. Mabi David (Good Food Community)
2. Anabel Julian (FDC)
3. Yuli Rustinawati (ASC Indonesia)
4. Raquel Castillo (SPELL)
5. Emellia Tamoh (Pemangkin Research Malaysia)
6. Esperanza Santos (TriMona)
7. Sastro Ma'ruf (KPRI)
8. Rene Ofreneo (FDC)



- Breakout group one members with Angging of AltDev as the facilitator.

Based on the nine-point program matrix, the group highlighted the following issues and potential projects from their breakout discussion:

1. *On Intergenerational Learning Exchange*

Group 1 proposed that MASSA focuses on engaging with the youth and the next generation of activists and leaders to ensure the organization's sustainability. The idea involved creating opportunities for intergenerational learning exchanges, aiming to bridge the gap between different age groups. The proposal included regional exchanges, with organizations like Pemangkin sending interns to other countries for fieldwork and learning directly from grassroots communities. Emphasizing the importance of hands on experience, Angging stressed that MASSA should lead this initiative at the Southeast Asian level.

2. *On Collaborative Research and Documentation*

Group 1 suggested continuing research and documentation efforts. However, it should expand beyond scholars to include communities as active participants. The goal is to collaborate on documenting diverse alternative practices within MASSA. Highlighting themes like agroecology and solidarity economy, the proposal aims to involve both academia and community members in authoring and publishing cases. The outcome would include statements or position papers representing MASSA as a movement.

3. *On Solidarity Enterprise Festival*

The first suggested project is to organize a Solidarity Enterprise Festival in Southeast Asia. Angging pointed out that while fair trade initiatives have been ongoing for years, these festivals lack cross-border partnerships. The proposal aims to explore and develop this idea in subsequent meetings.

4. *On Resource Mobilization*

Addressing the need for resource mobilization, the group emphasized that "resources" do not solely refer to external funds. Instead, the focus was on leveraging the capacities and internal resources within MASSA. The question posed was how to bridge the gap between the organization's existing capabilities and its resource needs.

BREAKOUT GROUP 2

Moderator: Jenito Santana (KSI)

Presenter: Ryan Silverio (ASC)

Group Members:

1. Hill Encierto (HomeNet Philippines)
2. Ernesto Prieto (HomeNet Philippines)
3. Seavmey Ngorn (GADC)
4. Ashley Saxby-Pinkerton (AFWA)



- Breakout group two members with Jenito of KSI as the facilitator.

Participants for Group 2 focused on the following areas:

1. Mobilizing alternative practices, regional interactions, communities, and organizing joint actions and initiatives;
2. Promoting the replication of the alternative practices in order to mainstream them;
3. Conducting alternative learning and training programs based on grassroots needs;
4. Coordinating the interactions between the alternative practices;

5. Convening and organizing conferences and workshop of the groups and communities involved in alternative practices; and
6. Researching and documenting alternative practices and building a database.

The group also presented the outcomes of their breakout session. The following are key pointers from their presentation:

1. *On the Structure and Governance of MASSA*

The discussion of Group 2 focused on establishing a structured governance body for MASSA. Establishing such would recognize the presence of regional and country-level members. The importance of managing power dynamics and respecting autonomy at the country level was emphasized. Additionally, exploring the feasibility of a membership fee and pooling resources, including human resources, to sustain MASSA's work was considered.

2. *On Cooperative and Social-Solidarity Enterprise*

The group proposed making cooperative and social solidarity enterprise a common learning thematic for MASSA members. The idea involved developing mutual aid systems, such as a collective fund, to ensure the sustainability of each MASSA member's work during challenging situations.

3. *On People-to-People Exchange*

The group emphasized the significance of people-to-people exchange, cross-movement learning, and understanding each other's thematic priorities. Suggestions included field visits to facilitate a deeper understanding of the work carried out by different members.

4. *On Leadership Strengthening at the Grassroots*

The group highlighted the need to strengthen leadership among grassroots members, with a specific focus on supporting home-based workers to enhance their influence on local governance.

5. *On Mainstreaming Issues*

The group discussed mainstreaming each other's issues into strategic programs. For instance, the suggestion was made to integrate sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE) into areas such as environmental protection, labor, and land reform.

6. *On Training and Learning Sessions*

The group proposed organizing training and learning sessions to develop an alternative learning and training program.

7. *On the Vision for MASSA*

Ryan shared the group's vision for MASSA. They envisioned the organization to become a collaborative space for members, fostering codesigned actions and common solidarity initiatives. One potential campaign discussed was advocating for a fair minimum wage across ASEAN, challenging the neoliberal model and countering narratives against trade agreements. The idea also included developing an alternative economic structure applicable across ASEAN or Southeast Asia.

BREAKOUT GROUP 3

Moderator and Presenter: Eri Trinurini Adhi (ASEC)

Group Members:

1. Phoungvyna Sangva (GADC)
2. Ricky Amukti (KPRI)
3. Elisabeth Lino de Araujo (APHEDA)
4. Carlos Sarmiento (UNAER)
5. Benjamin Quinones (ASEC)
6. Benjamin Velasco (Partido Manggagawa)



■ Breakout group three members with Eri of ASEC as the facilitator.

For Group 3, Eri presented the outcomes of their breakout discussion. She outlined several key proposals, namely:

1. *On the Coordination and Interactions Between Alternative Practices*

The group emphasized promoting the seven principles of solidarity and cooperativism within MASSA organizations. The primary project involves self-assessment to gauge compliance with these principles. To facilitate this, tools for assessment should be developed and shared through collaboration with MASSA. Each country is encouraged to conduct a self-assessment in their organizations, eventually leading to a country mapping on solidarity and cooperative principles.

2. *On Conferences and Workshops*

Building on self-assessment, the group proposed organizing conferences and workshops to delve into the seven principles of solidarity and cooperation. The focus should be on the process rather than strict compliance. Utilization of a Google Form for thematic clustering of member organizations, based on the issues they work on, was suggested as an efficient starting point. Implementing such would maximize the organization of various workshops, the addressing of common issues, and the fostering of learning and collaboration.

3. *On Research*

The group emphasized the importance of basic research involving all MASSA members. National data from each country and organization under supervision will be gathered for advocacy purposes. The research plan will include agenda, themes, presenters, and open discussions. Zoom was suggested as the preferred medium.

4. *On Conducting Alternative Learning and Training*

Training sessions would be designed to build capacity on assessment tools. The training would also focus on program identification in each country. An innovative approach involves making training accessible to everyone through video, particularly beneficial for young participants.

5. *On Conceptualizing and Establishing a Regional Mechanism*

The group acknowledged the voluntary nature of MASSA and proposed a regional mechanism based on voluntary participation and issue-based collaboration. Rather than a structured government-like setup, the emphasis is on leveraging the strengths of organizations to form thematic mechanisms, fostering synergy and volunteerism within MASSA.

BREAKOUT GROUP 4

Moderator: Eduardo Tadem (AltDev)

Group Members:

1. Benjamin Velasco (Partido Manggagawa)
2. Ruel Punongbayan (11.11.11)
3. Yuli Riswati (Kabar Bumi)
4. Agustiana (KPRI)
5. Erni Kartini (SPP)
6. Thanaraj Murudi (All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for SDGs)
7. Chandy Eng (GADC)
8. Ramesh Bhatti (Vikalp Sangam)
9. Josephine Parilla (HomeNet)

Group 4 outlined the various issues and challenges faced by MASSA. Here are the issues and challenges they identified:

1. *In the Structure of MASSA*

Coordinating among MASSA members proves challenging. There is a lack of support and clarity regarding roles.

2. *In Resource Mobilization*

MASSA faces difficulties in utilizing the budget for participant support due to government funding restrictions and its lack of legal registration.

3. *In Common Goals and Network Ownership*

The group finds the lack of public discourse on topics like LGBTQIA+ issues, the feeling of non-ownership in the network, and the difficulty in finding convergence on various issues to be challenging.

4. *In Power Imbalance*

A perceived power imbalance between older and younger members within the MASSA network exists.

5. *In Strategy*

Without a strategy to map targets and milestones, MASSA might face challenges in campaign and policy strategy development and communication.

6. *In Addressing Language and Inclusivity Barriers*

MASSA might struggle with translating concepts effectively and communicating them beyond direct translation.

7. *Visibility*

There is a lack of a policy and strategy for MASSA's visibility. There is also the concern of other entities using the same and/or similar name of the organization.

The group proposed these responses and suggestions to the challenges faced by MASSA:

1. *Legal Registration*

Explore ways to legally register MASSA, learning from alternative registration practices.

2. *Information Distribution Platform*

Establish a formal platform for distributing information among MASSA members.

3. *Language Issue*

Address language barriers by having conference participants translate materials into local languages.

4. *Communication and Visibility Strategy*

Develop a communication strategy with a visibility plan and a common goal.

5. *Theory Development*

Revisit existing theories and ideologies, building upon ground practices, identifying policy gaps, and documenting practices.

6. *Financial Resources*

Seek financial resources and develop projects and programs around them.

7. *Government Influence*

Influence governments to adapt MASSA's practices and initiatives on the ground.

8. *Cross-Border Solidarity*

Explore cross-border issues, particularly with migrant workers, and include them as part of MASSA's focus.

9. *Power Balance*

Encourage increasing roles for young people in MASSA and promote power-sharing, emphasizing the role of grassroots.

10. *Communication Strategy*

Develop a comprehensive communication strategy.

11. *Target Mapping*

Identify targets at regional and national levels.

12. *Language and Communication*

Translate concepts to learnings and effectively communicate them with the public.

13. *Visibility Challenges*

Address concerns about other groups using the same name and consider specific examples like seafarers and cryptocurrency.

Resource Mapping and the Structure of MASSA

■ Dr. Ben Quiñones *Asian Solidarity Economy Council*

Following the breakout session, Asst. Prof. Sy provided a synthesis of the discussion, building up on the points raised by the four groups. The discussions highlighted key internal issues within MASSA. The synthesis focused on clarifying the roles of various organizations, understanding their operationalization, and addressing concerns related to funding, legal registration, and visibility. He suggested that the specific roles and responsibilities of organizations within MASSA would be discussed further in the next session led by Dr. Ben Quiñones.

Dr. Quiñones formally commenced the session by stressing the importance of understanding the organizational capacity and resources within MASSA. He encouraged participants to conduct a mapping exercise, focusing on assets, liabilities, and equity, and estimating their budget for 2024. The goal was to create transparency within organizations, including aspects like funding sources, staff distribution, and expertise. The discussion aimed to assess the load each organization carries and explore potential resources beyond dependence on UP CIDS AltDev.



■ Dr. Quiñones facilitating the resource mapping and structure of MASSA segment.



- Raquel facilitating the construction of the pledge house.



- Eunice and Junah of AltDev affixing participants' cloth to the wall, building the logo of MASSA.



- MASSA members and conference's participants sticking their commitments to MASSA's pledge house.



- MASSA members and conference's participants sticking their commitments to MASSA's pledge house



- Wira presenting the participants' commitments.

- Participants were directed in the construction of a pledge house, utilizing their cloth to form both the roof and walls. This symbolic structure is intended to represent the collaboration and unity stemming from the diverse backgrounds of the participants. The resulting formation, resembling a house and logo, served as a visual representation of individuals coming together for a shared purpose and commitment: a regional integration from below.

After the different organizations presented their resources, Dr. Quiñones expressed the intention to establish partnerships for economic development within MASSA. He emphasized the significance of an economic base for sustainable alternative regionalism. He highlighted the potential impact of presenting a regional structure with substantial assets, suggesting that such a narrative could enhance their credibility when approaching funding agencies.

Moving into his next presentation, Dr. Quiñones revisited the structure of MASSA, emphasizing the principle of rotating leadership and hosting responsibilities among member countries. He proposed a commitment to documenting and presenting the economic assets of each organization within the network. He then outlined the plans for immediate projects, such as documentation and case studies, and assigned anchor organizations for specific themes. He suggested collaboration on projects among member countries and urged transparent discussions on resources and funding. He also introduced the idea of pooling small funds from members as a sustainable initiative for the regional network.

The session concluded with a challenge to mobilize resources and an enthusiastic collective agreement among participants.

Synthesis, Agreements, and Assigning of Roles and Responsibilities and Taking of Commitments

- **Raquel Castillo**
Solidarity for People’s Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL)
- **Wira Ginting**
Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA)

For a symbolic commitment, Raquel Castillo of SPELL referred to the previous session with Dr. Quiñones, reminding the participants of the commitments made. She introduced the idea of working together to build a tapestry, connecting it to the symbolism in the organization’s logo—a representation of diverse backgrounds coming together to create a shared space. The session aimed to gather input from participants regarding their commitments and what would be beneficial for their organizations and MASSA.

Participants were tasked with detailing their specific roles and contributions to the vision and projects of MASSA in the upcoming years. They wrote down their commitments on papers, and these were affixed to the wall alongside the symbolic tapestry.

The table below is the compilation of the commitments and roles made by the participants at the conference:

Organization/ Individual Participant	Country	Commitment
Homenet	Philippines	■ 3 Ts: talent, time, and treasure
Serikat Petani Pasundan (SPP)	Indonesia	■ Weaving network social economic enterprise ■ MASSA host for next year, 2024 (people party) ■ Land for MASSA College

Organization/ Individual Participant	Country	Commitment
Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)	Philippines/ Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ASEC can lead the project of self-assessments on seven principles (method, database, and socialization). ■ ASEC will lead the capacity building for MASSA's members on social entrepreneurship.
Gender and Development Cambodia (GADC)	Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Active membership ■ Collaboration on research/ campaign ■ Visibility of MASSA ■ Sharing role in gender and feminist education initiative; methodology working among the grassroots, communities ■ Fundraising ■ Co-coordinate meetings ■ Join meetings/campaigns ■ Actively engage ■ Organizing joint conference/activity ■ Sharing/exchanging experiences ■ Hosting the MASSA 2025 meeting
Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA)	Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contribute to regional knowledge and perspective on global supply chain, garment workers, and living wage. Because Asia Floor Wage is also present in Southeast Asia and South Asia, AFWA will bring insights from MASSA to Asia the Floor Wage. Hopefully, it can also go to the South Asia group. ■ Bring MASSA perspective to our network/ partners

Organization/ Individual Participant	Country	Commitment
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus	Philippines/ Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaboration with SOGIE in SE Asia ■ SOGIESC and feminist approach to cross-movement collaboration ■ Southeast Asia Queer Cultural Festival ■ Provide data in the involvement of LGBTQIA+ persons in the social-solidarity economy ■ Learning session on social solidarity economy for LGBTQIA+ activists
Vikalp Sangam	India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can lend hands for joint events ■ Sharing learnings and experiences ■ Building the capacities of people
Peoples' Global Exchange	Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Would promote/popularize MASSA in the Philippines, its principles, and vision, mission, and goals (VMG) ■ Be part of all activities of MASSA–Philippines ■ Promote people's economy/solidarity economy
All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM-SDG)	Malaysia (ASEC Regional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make MASSA more visible ■ Collaborate with MASSA
Pemangkin Research		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote the alternatives to fellow Sarawakians ■ Start thinking about alternative projects
Uniaun Agrikultores Ermera (UNAER) Kdadalak Sulimutuk Institute (KSI) Australian People For Health Education & Development Abroad (APHEDA)	Timor-Leste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social protection ■ Social solidarity economy ■ Agroecology ■ Mobilizing alternative practices ■ Conducting alternative learning ■ Social and legal protection for informal sector

Organization/ Individual Participant	Country	Commitment
Good Food Community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Documentation of grassroots-based local alternative solidarity food networks ■ Campaign to engage consumers in solidarity-based food networks and promotion of agroecology
11.11.11 Coalition for International Solidarity	Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connect MASSA to other regional and international networks and help strengthen national platforms and activist movements that are working for political change
Homenet Southeast Asia	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Share experiences and documents, research on social protection, marketing, organizing, etc.
Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI)	Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Convening and organizing community discussion ■ Building assets valuation form
Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)	Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unity with like-minded groups ■ Continuing to be part of the network; strengthen ties ■ Further advancing social solidarity economy, a component of people's economy of framework
Kabar Bumi	Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Active membership ■ People-to-People Exchange (share and exchange experience) ■ Promotion of MASSA

In summary, the participating organizations made several commitments to document and mainstream alternatives, continue collaboration, and continue engagement as active members of MASSA. Additionally, the peasant union SPP proposed a MASSA school to strongly sustain the mission of MASSA. SPP offered a piece of land in their reclaimed territory in West Java, Indonesia to build the physical structure of the center in the future. Raquel then emphasized the need

for financial support to implement these plans, specifically seeking assistance from Timor-Leste for funding the operation of the school.

Agustiana emphasized the importance of having a contract to move beyond mere discourse exchange and ensure concrete actions. Raquel and Wira expressed enthusiasm and rallied participants with chants of *isang bagsak* (one clap), a symbol of a collective agreement.

Closing the conference, Asst. Prof. Sy expressed gratitude and highlighted the commitments made during the event. He reiterated the plans for the next alternative regionalism conferences, alongside SPP volunteering to host in 2024 and GADC in 2025. Yuli Riswati also shared that SPP would lay the first stone for the MASSA University in the next year's meeting.



- The conference ended with a video presentation about the next host for the Fifth Regional Conference: SPP's programs and activities. Finally, the program ended with a group photo with the pledge house.

Acknowledgments

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