

# Defining labor rules in a liberalizing ASEAN

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## **Abstract:**

Southeast Asia is a rapidly liberalizing regional economy. The ten-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has already reduced intra-regional trade tariffs to 0-5 per cent. ASEAN has also targeted 2015 as the year the region shall become one “ASEAN Economic Community” (AEC) characterized by the free flow of goods, capital and services.

However, the ASEAN economic integration process is driven largely by the operations of transnational corporations (TNCs), which treat the different ASEAN and Asian countries as parts of their “Factory Asia” and “Back Office Asia”. Under their global production and service chains, the TNCs help fuel some kind of a “Race to the Bottom” by using lower wages, weak labor standards and limited workers’ rights as basis for their investment decisions in the various ASEAN and Asian countries. Within the ASEAN itself, member governments have also studiously avoided any formal discussion of industrial relations issues, including the core international conventions.

Can the ASEAN pursue deeper integration without addressing basic labor and industrial relations concerns?

This paper outlines the major labor and industrial relations concerns in the ASEAN and argues why it is to the interest of the ASEAN governments to address these concerns in a more proactive way in order to avoid the beggar-thy-neighbor attitude among member countries. The paper cites the beneficial effects of the ASEAN Declaration on the Promotion and Protection of Migrant Rights, a declaration that strengthens the capacity of both labor-receiving and labor-sending countries in dealing with the realities of an emerging ASEAN Labor Market.

The paper also discusses the various initiatives undertaken by the trade unions and civil societies in their efforts to engage – through social dialogues -- the ASEAN leadership on the labor and social rules of integration. The paper ends with a discussion of the success of some trade unions in forging positive relationship or social partnership with big corporations in the ASEAN and how such partnership can serve as a model and a guide in promoting and strengthening a Social ASEAN.

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## **Introduction**

In 2003, the Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed the Bali Concord II declaring their collective vision of a unified “ASEAN community” based on three pillars of integration – economic, socio-cultural and political-security. Accordingly, the region shall be “a community of caring societies, committed to upholding cultural diversity and social harmony” (ASEAN Leaders, 7 October 2003).

This paper outlines the deep economic liberalization processes taking place in the ASEAN. However, it argues that economic liberalization is not necessarily the same as economic integration. Such liberalization has not led to equitable and balanced development across the region. Moreover, the paper points out the glaring weaknesses of the ASEAN in addressing the social and labor dimensions of integration. These weaknesses, in turn, have inspired the trade unions and other civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage ASEAN on the social and labor rules that would help shape a “Social ASEAN”. This paper comes up with a brief scorecard on the outcomes of this engagement. The paper ends with a short discussion on some challenges on how to continue the trade union-CSO campaign for Social ASEAN.

## **ASEAN economic integration efforts: An overview**

ASEAN is now 42 years old. However, the first two and a half decades of ASEAN were relatively uneventful. There was no ASEAN Work Program to speak of. The Secretariat was established only in the 1980s based on modest contributions from the five founding member countries -- Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. In 1984, ASEAN 5 became ASEAN 6 with the entry of Brunei. The reality was that ASEAN was formed largely to counter the Communist influence in the region amidst the US-Indochina conflicts in the 1960s and 1970s. The rhetorics of the ASEAN then emphasized the principles of good neighborly relations and the peaceful settlement of border conflicts (Sugiono, 2008).

However, the image of ASEAN began to change in the 1990s when it became more visible on the global economic radar in the 1990s. In this decade, the Vietnam War, which ended in 1975, had ceased to haunt the ASEAN 6. Like China and Eastern Europe, Vietnam and the other Indochinese states of Cambodia and Laos, together with Myanmar, had formally opted for a market-oriented economic policy in the 1990s. Subsequently, they applied for ASEAN membership. Thus, ASEAN 6 became ASEAN 6 + 4 with the entry of these four CLMV countries in 1995-99.

ASEAN then began focusing its attention on regional economic integration via economic liberalization (see overview materials in Kiem, C., 2007; Lohman, W. and Kim, A., 29 January 2008; and Ofreneo, R. 2008). An ambitious integration program was launched in 1992, this time the goal was the conversion of the territory of the ASEAN into a free-trade area (FTA) by the turn of the millenium. The FTA project was to be facilitated by a Free Trade Agreement (AFTA)-Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT). The AFTA-CEPT scheme called for the reduction of tariffs of member countries to 0-5 per cent by 2008. The target date was later advanced to 2003; however, for the CLMV countries, the compliance date was extended by a few years. Member countries were allowed to

exclude on a temporary basis sensitive products such as rice for the Philippines, auto for Malaysia and so on. Given the varying tariff systems among them, ASEAN also moved for the adoption of an ASEAN Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN) system.

In 1995, ASEAN also approved the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS), a regional adaptation of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) seeking to govern global trading of services via four modes – cross-border, consumption abroad, commercial presence and movement of service personnel. AFAS was followed by the ASEAN Investment Agreement (AIA), which was signed in 2007 and which seeks to promote the free flow of investments within or across the region.

At the turn of the new millennium, the ASEAN integration agenda was further deepened. In 2003, under the Bali Concord II, the ASEAN declared its ambition to transform the region into an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) characterized by free trade in goods and services, free flow of investments and free movement of skilled labor within the ASEAN region. Subsequently, ASEAN advanced the AEC program to 2015.

In preparation for the AEC, ASEAN announced the implementation of 11 priority integration projects (PIPs). The idea is to subject 11 economic sectors to early liberalization through “*liberalisation and facilitation measures in the area of trade in goods, services and investments*” and higher “*private sector participation* (Vientiane Action Programme, 2004). The 11 sectors account for more than 50 per cent of the ASEAN’s GDP. These are -- Electronics, Automotive, Garments, Textiles, Aviation, E-ASEAN/ICT, Health care, Agri-based, Fishery, Rubber-based and Wood-based. In 2007, Logistics was added as the 12<sup>th</sup> PIP, apparently to strengthen the integration process through the value chain production and business processes.

Also in 2007, a Road Map for the AEC or the AEC Blueprint was adopted. The blueprint simply elaborates on the ideas of the PIPs. Accordingly, the AEC goals are to have an ASEAN single market and transform ASEAN into a single production base. This will be attained once the following are developed: 1) free flow of goods, with tariffs reduced to zero and non-tariff barriers eliminated, along with improvements in trade facilitation and the administration of the rules of origin (ROOs); 2) free flow of services, particularly in air transport, e-ASEAN, health care and tourism; 3) free flow of investment under the AIA; 4) free flow of capital, with the full operations of the ASEAN Capital Market Development; and 5) free flow of *skilled* labour, with visas and employment passes given to professionals and skilled labour.

### **Open regionalism, Noodle bowl of liberalization schemes**

In reality, ASEAN’s economic regionalism is not a closed system. It is open regionalism. In fact, most of the member countries have pursued their own unilateral economic liberalization in the 1990s not only as part of their compliance with the WTO membership requirements but also as part of their economic development strategy. This unilateral liberalization explains why usage of “Form D” under the AFTA-CEPT constitutes only 5 per cent of the total intra-ASEAN trade, meaning member countries are trading with one another freely because the borders are relatively free (WTO, 2003).

On top of this unilateral liberalization, the ASEAN member countries are pursuing their own bilateral free trade agreements (BFTAs) and are supporting the regional free trade agreements (RFTAs) the ASEAN has been concluding with non-ASEAN countries dubbed as “Dialogue Partners”. The first group of non-ASEAN partner countries consists of China, Japan and South Korea. As early as 1990, Malaysia’s Prime Minister Mahathir had been calling for greater cooperation with these countries under the concept of “East Asia Growth Area” or EAGA (. In the late 1990s, relations with these East Asian countries intensified. Today, every Annual Leaders Summit is accompanied by an ASEAN + 3 Summit (Chandra, A., 2005).

In 2000, China proposed an FTA with ASEAN. In 2002, a Framework Agreement (FA) with China for an ASEAN-China FTA (ACFTA) was concluded. The FA calls for a two-step process – an immediate early harvest agreement (EHA) covering a number of industrial and agricultural goods and an eventual FTA by 2010. Not to be outdone, Japan pushed by late 2002 its FA for an ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (AJCEPA). South Korea later came up with its own FA and FTA concept. The FTA’s with these three East Asian countries are the reason why observers are saying that the AEC is being transformed in fact into an East Asian Community, which Japan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have been pushing. This is a revival of some sorts of the old Japanese vision of an East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere enunciated in the 1940s.

These RFTAs have not prevented individual ASEAN countries in concluding bilateral free trade agreements (BFTAs) with the individual non-ASEAN partner countries. These BFTAs are more advanced compared to the usual FTA under the WTO rules and the RFTAs as well. A BFTA is a bilateral agreement not only on trade in goods and services but also on the so-called “Singapore issues”, namely, investment, trade facilitation, government procurement and customs administration. As a background, the Singapore issues, first baptized as such in 1996 during the WTO Ministerial in Singapore, were widely denounced by developing countries in the 2003 WTO Ministerial in Cancun for being too intrusive into the national affairs of member countries (Fair Trade Alliance, 2006).

Today, ASEAN is also developing or exploring FTAs with Australia, New Zealand, United States, European Union, India, Pakistan and the Russian Federation, while the individual ASEAN countries are also pursuing their own BFTAs with these non-ASEAN countries. Hence, the phenomenon of the “Asian noodle bowl” of trade agreements, characterized by a confusing intermeshing of unilateral, bilateral, regional, intra-regional and extra-regional trade agreements (Baldwin, 2007; Ofreneo, 2008). Thus, the term ASEAN + 3 + 3 plus plus. There are even proposals for a grand FTA for Asia and the Pacific (FTAAP), first raised by the United States in 2006, and the possible merger of AFTA and the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) of the Indian sub-continent, which is favored by some ADB economists .

To complete the trade relations picture, all ASEAN member countries are also active members of the WTO, where new trade agreements covering industry, agriculture and services are on the drawing board under the Doha Development Round (DDR).

Although the intermeshing noodles of trade agreements are confusing, the liberalization agenda carried out by these agreements are strikingly similar. In particular, all are prescribing liberalization of trade regimes (via tariff reduction and elimination of non-tariff

barriers), privatization of government services (e.g., post/telecoms), open-door policy to foreign investments, and deregulation of economic sectors (e.g., finance, transport). All these liberalization measures are justified in terms of benefits expected to accrue to participating countries such as expansion in trade, exports, employment and enhanced competitiveness of their domestic and export industries.

### **Main beneficiaries of ASEAN integration**

Who are then the main beneficiaries of the above liberalization schemes?

The obvious answer is that they are the economic actors able to operate across the region, meaning those with regional and global reach. This is the reason why a 2006 ADB study summed up in two words the industrial integration taking place in ASEAN – “Factory Asia”, which refers to the chain of production activities farmed out in the different ASEAN/Asian countries by transnational companies (TNCs). Under their global supply production system, the TNCs have transformed garments sewing, electronics assembly, auto parts manufacture and other labor-intensive undertakings into global and Asian industries. For example, with the exception of Singapore and Brunei, the different ASEAN countries are engaged in one form or another in garments production for export, not on the basis of industrial complementation but more in the context of a TNC producer or supplier picking up profitable sites, usually export processing zones (EPZs), as platforms for labor-intensive exports retailed or distributed globally by the TNCs. In electronics, some countries specialize in labor-intensive and simplified assembly work, while others do higher and more sophisticated processing or application of electronics parts and still others doing design, testing and packaging. In fact, electronics account for a great part of the so-called intra-ASEAN trade, which is nothing but intra-TNC trade involving subcontractors, suppliers and subsidiaries of the same TNCs. In the case of the auto industry, the names crowding the list of registered companies under the old ASEAN Industrial Complementation (AICO) program are the different subsidiary companies of Japanese auto makers in the different ASEAN countries. This is regional industrial complementation within a TNC (Baldwin, R., 2007; Ng, C. and Mammal, M. S., 2008) .

But there is also “Back Office Asia” for the service sector involving ICT-enabled cross-border transactions such as customer service or contact center work and IT processing of solutions to outsourced work such as payroll preparation, financial estimations, customized programming and the like. India and the Philippines are the leading players in Back Office Asia; however, other ASEAN countries are also eyeing a bigger role in this emerging global business (Ofreneo, R., “ASEAN/Asian Integration”, 2008).

Finally, one must add “Investment Asia” to refer to the cross-border investments being made by TNCs in various countries under a regime of economic liberalization and deregulation. Thus, the more open ASEAN becomes, the more one sees the names of the big TNCs from North America, Europe, Japan, South Korea, China and others adorning the advertising pages in the ASEAN region. Investment Asia covers virtually everything, from agricultural seed production to agricultural processing, from golf and resort operations to medical tourism, from stock market placements to real estate development, and so on and so forth.

Overall, it is abundantly clear that those benefiting from the ASEAN economic integration are the TNCs, whether or not they are engaged in Factory Asia or Back-Office Asia or Investment Asia operations. It is also abundantly clear that TNC operations across the ASEAN and across the Asia-Pacific region are facilitated by economic liberalization and further aided by modern transport and the ICT communication revolution. These TNCs may be TNCs from the OECD countries or are home-grown ASEAN TNCs.

### **Social and labor dimensions of Economic integration**

What then are the attitudes of the trade unions and working people towards the ASEAN, specifically its economic integration project?

First, it is generally one of puzzlement. The above mesmerizing noodle bowl of liberalization schemes is not only confusing but is also hardly understood by the ordinary people. The truth is that most of these integration-liberalization schemes were hatched and implemented without any consultation with them nor were these projects accompanied by any popular information-communication-dissemination campaign. These projects were all decided or crafted at the inter-governmental ministerial level, which is the governance system in place in the ASEAN. These projects are usually given final blessings in the annual ASEAN Leaders' Summit.

Second, they are seen with great reservations by the organized segments of the working population led by the trade unions and CSOs. These ASEAN economic liberalization schemes are associated with the general phenomenon of economic globalization and liberalization, which have a generally adverse impact on job and union security. Trade unions, peasant organizations and CSOs have seen how economic openness and the ensuing economic competition have caused incessant changes and realignment in both industry and agriculture across the region. Whatever corporate restructuring measures are undertaken, the overall effect of such restructuring measures are changes in work, work patterns and work retention. In turn, such changes generally lead to job insecurities. Worse, in the larger labor market, increased competition associated with economic liberalization is translated to a race for the search for cheaper and malleable labor (Ng, C., and Mammal, M.S., 2008).

This Race to the Bottom phenomenon is the explanation for the endless HR reengineering, outsourcing, reconfiguring of work and shift to short-term hiring. In the end, jobs become less stable and union and labor rights are open trampled upon in the name of competitiveness. A central reality in the labor market of many ASEAN countries is the increasing flexibility in the hiring and firing of workers, or what labor economists call as "external labor market flexibility". Footloose investments require flexible labor hiring and firing arrangements. This gives rise to the widespread phenomenon of short-term hiring variedly called by trade union organizers as 'casualization', 'informalization', 'contractualization', 'irregularization' and 'non-standardization' of work. The sources of flexible labor are migrants from the rural areas, overseas workers, displaced workers from state-owned enterprises (SOEs), "redundated" workers and the large army of unemployed/underemployed workers (AMRC, 2008).

For the CSOs, there is a whole range of issues which they feel the ASEAN is unable or even unwilling to address such as human rights in Myanmar, gender concerns,

sustainable agriculture, environment and migrants issues (see, for instance, SEACA, 2008). In addition, economic analysts contend that the noodle bowl of liberalization schemes in the ASEAN do not necessarily lead to greater and harmonious economic integration within the region; they may, in fact, exacerbate the “development gaps” between and among ten ASEAN countries which are at ten different levels of development (Baldwin, R., 2007; Ofreneo, R., 2008).

### **Unionism and industrial relations (IR)**

And yet, in ASEAN there is hardly any discussion of the downsides of liberalization, of the situation of the weak and vulnerables under globalization and economic regional integration/liberalization, and of the needed safety nets for those adversely affected by increased and accelerated market opening.

ASEAN, with its “ASEAN way” of taking decisions, has also studiously avoided any serious discussion of trade unionism and labor rights and their observance region-wide. Parallel with the ASEAN Leaders Summit, the SLOM or the Senior Labor Officials or Ministers have been also been meeting annually since the 1980s. And yet, their meetings, up to 2007, were generally short and tackled only non-core-labor issues such as human resources development, skills upgrading, mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) on skills/talents, employment promotion, employment strategies, labor administration, information sharing on labor concerns, health and safety, HIV at the work place, and the like. In the early SLOM years, there were calls for labor law flexibility and even denunciation of foreign intervention in national trade union affairs (Ofreneo, R., “ASEAN/Asian Integration”, 2008).

Overall, ASEAN has a weak record in IR when it comes to the issue of core labor standards. Myanmar, in particular, is a source of embarrassment for the association.

However, the ASEAN has been focusing lately on positive IR without touching on the sensitive topics of trade unionism and core labor standards. This it did in October 2008 in an “HR Summit” officially endorsed by SLOM. The highlight of the Summit is the release of the “Mercer Report”<sup>2</sup> on HR in the ASEAN, which bats for “progressive and flexible” IR and HRM practices. It came up with the following recommendations: review of “labour practices to create a more favourable investment environment”; promotion of “Labour law flexibility” as “one of the key drivers of competitiveness”; maintaining the “unique ‘ASEAN way’ of partnership” as an “ASEAN’s comparative advantage”; promotion of skills training to raise “labour quality”; and “Capacity building in the area of labour market statistics” (Mercer Consulting, 2008).

### **Trade unions and CSOs engage ASEAN**

Given the foregoing historical background on ASEAN and the IR situation in the region, it is not surprising that a number of trade unions and CSOs in the region have decided to actively engage the ASEAN, primarily through dialogues with the ASEAN Secretariat in

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<sup>2</sup> Mercer is a transnational HR consulting firm doing consulting work on IR and HRM for TNCs such as Shell.

Jakarta, on critical integration issues such as human rights, core labor standards and other concerns in the integration processes.

Among the first to do this kind of engagement is a loose group of human rights advocates in the region called the ASEAN Working Group on Human Rights or AWGHR, which has been a consistent critic of the ASEAN kid-glove treatment of Myanmar's human rights violations and which has been seeking stronger compliance of ASEAN with international standards on human and labor rights. Several ASEAN-focused peasant and environmental CSOs were also formed in the 1990s to promote sustainable agriculture and environmental protection (Chandra, A. and Chavez, J., 2008).

In the early years of the present decade, the Asia-Pacific regional organizations (APROs) of the international trade union secretariats (now called global unions) crafted the "ASEAN Social Charter" with the assistance of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). The ASEAN Social Charter or ASC sought the ASEAN recognition of and compliance with the international core labor standards (Serrano, M. *et al*, 2004). At about the same time, the network of "Institutes of Strategic and International Studies" (ISIS) in the region, which has been working closely with the ASEAN, decided to launch a series of annual "ASEAN People's Assembly" (APA) involving various CSOs in the region. The various APAs have produced a long list of social and economic concerns which they want ASEAN to address, from environmental and agricultural issues to employment and fair trade demands and to a more inclusive and consultative system of governance in the ASEAN (ASEAN-ISIS, 2005; ASEAN-ISIS, 2006).

In 2005, Malaysia's University Teknologi MARA sponsored a broad gathering of CSOs in time for the ASEAN Leaders' Summit being hosted by Malaysia. This "first" ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) was able to attract a large number of APA-associated and non-APA CSOs across the region, including the Third World Network (TWN), the Southeast Asian Committee for Advocacy (SEACA) and the APRO of the Union Network International (UNI-APRO). The organizers were also able to secure 15 minutes for a dialogue by select CSO representatives with the ASEAN Leaders during their Summit (Salleh, U., *et al.*, 2006) This 2005 ACSC was followed by a bigger ACSC in 2006 (held in Cebu, Philippines), in 2007 (Singapore) and February 2009 (Bangkok, Thailand).

After the 2005 ACSC-ASEAN interaction, the CSO interaction with the ASEAN has also intensified. The Eminent Person Group (EPG) tasked by the ASEAN to develop the concept of an "ASEAN Charter", meant to transform ASEAN into a rules-based organization, held a series of national and regional consultation-dialogues with the CSOs (EPG, 2006). This was followed by a similar series of consultation-dialogues convened by the High-Level Task Force to Draft the ASEAN Charter and in 2008, by the High-Level Task Force on the Human Rights Body under the ASEAN Charter.

On the specific labor front, an "ASEM process" or the series of ASEAN-European Ministers meetings has been tackling, at an increasingly higher level, various labor and social issues (ITUC, 2008). The ASEM agenda includes observance of core labor rights ASEAN-wide, especially in Myanmar. However, the most dramatic development occurred in January 2007, when the ASEAN Leaders Summit adopted a historic "ASEAN Declaration on Rights of Migrant Workers", a declaration that was unthinkable in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The Declaration has the following key features: calls for agreement on how to resolve cases of undocumented workers; states obligations of labor-receiving countries to provide migrant workers access to legal and judicial facilities;



asks labor-sending countries to have comprehensive system of regulating work migration, from recruitment to deployment and eventual re-integration; demands regional cooperation in combating human trafficking, data-sharing and promotion of migrant welfare; commits “to develop an ASEAN instrument” on the Declaration; and directs the ASEAN Sec-Gen to submit progress report on the Declaration (Ofreneo, “ASEAN/Asian Integration”, 2008).

Clearly, the possibility for change and meaningful progressive reform is possible even within the context of the slow and gradualist ASEAN processes – through persistent trade union-CSO advocacy work and meaningful social dialogues.

### **Winning trade union/CSO seats in the ASEAN table: Still a long shot but space is widening**

However, winning seats in the ASEAN table for the trade unions and CSOs is still a long work in progress. The trade union-CSOs’ gains under the ASEAN Declaration on Migrant Rights and the Human Rights Body of the ASEAN Charter remain paper gains, for there are still no implementing or operational rules in place. In the February ASEAN Leaders’ Summit, the ACSC representative delegation was also taken aback when the ASEAN Leaders refused to allow the delegation if the CSO delegates of Myanmar and Cambodia were present.

And yet, there are signs that the space for trade unions and CSOs is widening. In the November 2008 ASEAN Social Forum held in Manila, the ASEAN-CSO participants as well as the representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat agreed on the importance and the need to deepen ASEAN-CSO interaction. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the General Secretary of ASEAN, pointed out, in a paper circulated in the conference, that under Article V of the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN is committed indeed to a deeper and constructive engagement with the CSOs (Pitsuwan, 2008). The same sense of deeper and meaningful engagement is reflected in the various ASEM meetings as mentioned above.

In the second week of February 2009, in Bogor, Indonesia, the APROs of the global union federations (GUFs) and the newly-formed ASEAN Service Employee Trade Union Council (ASETUC) held a workshop. The outcome was a declaration of the trade unions’ readiness not only to hold social dialogues but also to work and cooperate with the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN governments, ASEAN Business Advisory Council and the ASEAN Chamber of Commerce and Industry on how to manage the challenges of regional integration in the context of social partnership and job/business preservation. Two weeks after, the ASEAN Secretariat and the ILO, with the help of the Japan’s Ministry of Labor, held also in Bogor a tripartite seminar on “good IR practices”. The outcome was pleasantly surprising. There was a tripartite consensus in support of good IR practices in the region consisting of measures strengthening national labor legal systems based on universal core labor standards, bipartite dialogues, tripartite social partnership and effective dispute settlement machinery (ASEAN-ILO/Japan, 2009). This is a giant leap from the situation of the 1980s and 1990s, when ASEAN would diplomatically and routinely set aside any discussion of IR issues based on core labor standards. The only drawback in the Bogor seminar: Myanmar had no representatives.

## Conclusion

Winning seats at the ASEAN table for the trade unions and CSOs may take time. However, it is also abundantly clear that the incessant advocacy by the trade unions and CSOs for a voice is bearing fruits, as the ASEAN is now forced to officially recognize the central importance of social dialogue with the broad civil society movement and tackle social and labor issues that were once thought impossible.

Clearly, the challenge for trade unions and CSOs is how to maintain the pressure and maintain the unity in their ranks, for ASEAN will only listen to a strong and organized social movement. However, on the part of the ASEAN Leaders and the ASEAN Secretariat, it will do them well to remember what Adam Malik of Indonesia, an ASEAN founding father, wrote in the 1980s: ***“the shaping of a future of peace, friendship and cooperation is far too important to be left to government and government officials... [as such, there is a need for] ever expanding involvement and participation of the people”*** (SEACA, 2008).

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