



Solidarity amid Disruptions

A Malaysia Scholars on Korea programme

14 Dec 2023 | 0930hrs-1430hrs MYT

Auditorium, ISIS Malaysia



Solidarity amid Disruptions

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The world is in various states of flux. Global economic growth is slowing and still reeling from post-pandemic recovery, the Ukraine-Russia conflict and a rising crisis in West Asia. Are geopolitical tensions shaping unilateral alliances, bilateral arrangements and aggravating states of trust?

Asia is attempting to navigate the global geopolitical state, with the Republic of Korea and Asean caught in the quagmire. On the one hand, states and nations are grappling with fulfilling national development plans amid a cost-of-living crisis. On the other, there is the search for partnerships and alliances that could be the next catalysts for growth while mitigating potential instability.

To achieve this, ROK unveiled its Strategy for a Free, Peaceful and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region that includes developing norms, security cooperation and tailored development partnerships. Among the partnerships is the Korea-Asean Solidarity Initiative (KASI) that encompasses cooperation in traditional and non-traditional security areas while emphasising Asean centrality.

KASI is expected to fit in the Indo-Pacific Strategy with aims of promoting Asean-ROK strategic coordination, increasing efforts to address and respond jointly to regional and global challenges while expanding cooperation in future and emerging areas for shared prosperity and development.

ROK's engagements in the Southeast Asia region have bloomed in recent years, yet there is much to explore.

The one-day conference aims to:

1. Stimulate discussions on ROK's foreign policy
2. Discuss the Korea-Asean Solidarity Initiative (KASI) and efforts in Malaysia
3. To articulate ideas for Malaysia-South Korea relations

The Malaysia Scholars on Korea (MASK) Network

The Malaysia Scholars on Korea (MASK) Network links Malaysian scholars, policymakers and think-tankers in conversations on Malaysia-South Korea relations. Through the years, MASK events have explored the intricacies of a Malaysia-South Korea Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, a special meeting following president Moon Jae-in's visit to Malaysia, possibilities for Asean engagement in the Korean Peninsula and South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy in Southeast Asia.



Programme

0930 – 1000 **Registration**

1000 – 1015 **Welcoming remarks**

HE Yeo Seung-bae

Ambassador
ROK Embassy in Malaysia

1015 – 1035 **Opening address**

Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Chairman
ISIS Malaysia

1035 – 1045 **Break**

1045 – 1205 **South Korea as a global pivotal state: building solidarity with Southeast Asia?**

South Korea's Strategy for a Free, Peaceful and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region is anchored in Seoul's view of itself as a global pivotal state, where the nation could look after its own as well as global interests. South Korea and Malaysia might share strategic perspectives, especially in balancing development amid major power tensions. The Korea-Asean Solidarity Initiative (KASI) is focused on eight core areas inclusive of security cooperation and promoting shared future prosperity. Greater engagements between Malaysia and ROK could help realise Seoul's global pivotal state ambitions while building closer relations. To this end:

- How does ROK assess priorities in its geostrategic environment? What are the international and domestic considerations shaping its strategic perspectives?
- Are there flashpoints in present geopolitical considerations? Could there be improved cooperation, including economic, military and strategic that could be addressed by both nations?
- Is there room for convergences of strategic priorities between Malaysia and ROK?
- What are the areas of collaboration between Malaysia, Asean and ROK under KASI?



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Moderator

Thomas Daniel

Senior Fellow
ISIS Malaysia

Speakers

Lee Dong-gy

Deputy Director-General, Asean Bureau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Korea

Dr Lee Jaehyon

Senior Fellow
Centre for Regional Studies
Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Discussants

Dr Nurliana Kamaruddin

Senior Lecturer
Asia-Europe Institute
Universiti Malaya

Dr Roy Anthony Rogers

Deputy Executive Director
Internationalisation, Research, Value Creation & Enterprise
Asia-Europe Institute
Universiti Malaya

Izzah Ibrahim

Analyst
ISIS Malaysia

1205 - 1215

Break

1215 - 1330

Building solidarity amid disruption: enhancing people-to-people relations

People-to-people relations are among the most challenging of diplomatic tools to cultivate and reap the rewards. Strong cultural relations, for instance, are said to be the foundation of trust, understanding and mutually beneficial



relationships. Malaysia-South Korea relations have been growing in recent years where economically, South Korea is Malaysia's eighth largest trading partner and seventh largest foreign investor. Meanwhile, Malaysia is South Korea's third largest trading partner and fourth largest investment destination in Asean. However, the Asean-Korea Centre's 2022 survey finds people-to-people awareness, especially among Korean youth on Malaysia, remains low. Meanwhile, Malaysians, who are consumers of Korean products and riding the rise of the Hallyu wave, could widen their understanding of Korean society.

- How do we quantify and assess people-to-people relations? Could Malaysia do more to promote aspects of our lives to South Korea?
- Is there room for further development in people-to-people relations, and could Malaysia and ROK leverage on exchanges to build resilient ties?
- Where are the gaps and challenges for the growth of people-to-people relations?
- How could creative industries and online platforms help develop synergies between Malaysia and ROK?

Moderator

Dr Nurliana Kamaruddin

Senior Lecturer
Asia-Europe Institute
Universiti Malaya

Speakers

Koh Chien Aun

Teaching Fellow
Monash University Malaysia

Dr Kim Hyungjong

Associate Professor
Department of International Relations
Yonsei University

Dr Christina Yeo Ken Yin

Undersecretary
International Relations Division (Culture)
Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture



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Discussants

Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir

Capacity Building Officer
All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on SDGs

Dr Geetha Govindasamy

Senior Lecturer
Department of East Asian Studies
Universiti Malaya

1330 - 1345

Onboarding new members of MASK

1345 - 1430

Lunch

Profiles

Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Chairman
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

A lawyer by training, Prof Faiz has extensive experience in public policy and research, and the corporate sector. He had served as special adviser to the Selangor government, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ministry of International Trade and Industry. He is the founding dean of Selangor Business School (UNISEL) and the author of books on jurisprudence, public policy and strategic management. He remains actively engaged in the public, economic and foreign policy spheres, both at a Track 1 and Track 2 level.



HE Yeo Seung-bae

Ambassador
ROK Embassy in Malaysia

Yeo was appointed as ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Malaysia in October. Prior to the appointment, he served as deputy minister for political affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which he joined in 1990. Yeo has held postings in China, Norway, Afghanistan and New Zealand. He had also served as foreign policy adviser to the prime minister.



Dr Christina Yeo Ken Yin

Undersecretary
International Relations Division (Culture)
Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture

Yeo assumed her current post in April 2020 and has been at the forefront of cultural diplomacy efforts to promote Malaysia's diverse arts, culture and heritage overseas. Her experience includes serving in various capacities across central agencies and ministries, with a focus on interdisciplinary advisory, research and policy development. Yeo is a founder member of Talent Corp, which spearheaded public-private partnership to deliver facilitative immigration instruments.





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Hirzawati Atikah Mohd Tahir

Capacity Building Officer
All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on SDGs

Hirzawati is a former research fellow at the East Asian International Relations and is co-writing a chapter and on the Korean Peninsula. She was a presenter at a seminar series on the comparison between Malaysia and South Korea's post-Covid policy. She is also a frequent attendee of seminars and forums on topics related to Korean Peninsula affairs.



Dr Geetha Govindasamy

Senior Lecturer
Department of East Asian Studies
Universiti Malaya

Dr Geetha is an expert on East Asian international relations, teaching courses related to East Asian regional affairs. She teaches, researches and publishes on inter-Korean issues and East Asian international relations. Geetha's networking experiences include academic exchanges at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea University; Institute of Far Easter Studies, Kyungnam University; and Graduate Institute, Geneva.



Izzah Ibrahim

Analyst
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Izzah's research areas look into foreign policy and security developments in the Asia-Pacific, including the ongoing unrest in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines and regional security cooperation in Asean. Her other research interests include nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and civil-military relations. She is also part of the Secretariat for the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP).



Dr Kim Hyungjong

Associate Professor
Department of International Relations
Yonsei University

Dr Kim is a former senior lecturer in the Southeast Asian Studies Department, Universiti Malaya. He is currently serving as vice-president of the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies. His research focuses on Asean and regionalism in East Asia. Some of his major outputs include 'Asean Socio-Cultural Community and Human Security', East Asia Research, 2022; and 'The Crisis in Myanmar and the Continuity and Change of Asean Norms', Southeast Asian Studies, 2020.



Koh Chien Aun

Teaching Fellow
Monash University Malaysia

Koh's research interests are in history, political and national identity formation. He has lectured and tutored extensively in the Monash School of Arts and Social Sciences as a sessional staff and briefly in Sunway University's School of Arts. He also taught Global Studies and Contemporary Issues in the Monash Foundation Year in Sunway College. Today, he assists in the Global Studies major under the School of Arts and Social Sciences. Koh's introduction to the Korean Wave was through early variety programmes and films.



Lee Dong-gy

Deputy Director-General, Asean Bureau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Korea

Lee joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1999 and is now overseeing the Asean bureau. His stints include first secretary, Southeast Asian division; director, South Asian and Oceanian affairs; coordinator of the New Southern Policy; and director for planning and finance.





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Dr Lee Jaehyon

Senior Fellow
Centre for Regional Studies
Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Dr Lee is a former visiting professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), Korean National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA). His research focuses on Southeast Asian politics and international relations, East Asian regional cooperation, and non-traditional and human security issues.



Dr Nurliana Kamaruddin

Senior Lecturer
Asia-Europe Institute
Universiti Malaya

Dr Nurliana also serves as deputy executive director (academic and student affairs) at UM, where she is a fellow at the Centre for Asean Regionalism. She specialises in international security and development cooperation with a focus on Asean and East Asia.



Dr Roy Anthony Rogers

Deputy Executive Director
Internationalisation, Research, Value Creation & Enterprise
Asia-Europe Institute
Universiti Malaya

Dr Rogers has taught at the Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College and the Malaysian Defence Armed Forces College. His area of specialisation includes political science, international relations and history (China and Central Asia). His research interests are government and politics of the Central Asian republics in Xinjiang.





Thomas Daniel

Senior Fellow
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Thomas' interests lie in the security/strategic challenges and impact of major power dynamics on ASEAN and its member states, the South China Sea dispute and Malaysia's national security and foreign policies. He also looks at the policy implications of refugees, asylum seekers and other displaced people in Malaysia and the government's refugee policy of 'not having a policy'.





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