

PANEL DISCUSSION
AND Q&A
SESSION III,
FORUM DAY 2
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By

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Since Economic Integration is the main topic of both presentations of the speakers from Malaysia and Japan, the discussion and Q&A session mostly focused on how to create ASEAN as an integrated economic community.

The discussion started with the question of the moderator about the role of “Political will” in the process of economic integration of ASEAN. Tackling this question, Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria suggested that we cannot deny the importance of “Politics” because it is one of 3 main pillars along with “Economic” and “Social”. However, the economic pillar will play as a core to motivate and move the community into vision of integration. The moderator also shared his opinion about the consequences of the recent global economic crisis as well as showed his wondering whether there is any dominance of more developed countries such as America, the European countries, Japan and China that may put pressure on the goal of creating an integrated community for ASEAN. To deal with those challenges, the two speakers agreed that cooperation between ASEAN countries and equal negotiation will be the key solutions.



Students also addressed some specific challenges that the countries in Asia Pacific area have to face to achieve the common goal and equal benefit. According to Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, it is an important task for ASEAN to keep its inclusive growth, integrated development and make people start considering ASEAN as an interconnected investment destination.

Having the similar concern, one of participated media posed a question on how the profit would be shared among the Asian countries. To clarify this question, the supply chain of Hitachi was taken as an example by Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria. She explained that regardless of which countries Hitachi is located in, the skills and goods are moving and because of the sort of integration of supply chains, everyone will benefit from Hitachi’s investment.



Answering the question on the managing authority of the whole community, Professor Yukiko Fukagawa affirmed that the whole basis of architecture for ASEAN integration must be very different from European Union. Despite the lack of basic social kind of unity like Roman Empire, or Greece civilization, ASEAN has common goals and value that can be guaranteed by keeping inclusive growth.

Furthermore, students continued to pose questions on non-tariff barriers and how to narrow the economic development gap among ASEAN countries. According to Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, transparency, predictability and consistency are the key principles to close the economic divide through ASEAN or even within a country. Moreover, once ASEAN is the combination of liberalization and cooperation; and the common standard should be back-ups in reducing the changes in non-tariff measures.

In response to a question posed by a student of Philippines concerning about the environment commitment, Datuk Dr. Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria referred to the term of EGS (environmental goods and services). She also pointed out that not only ASEAN but also WTO, APEC are considering these issues of environment and the question of how to forest environmental sustainable development should be answered at the same time as proposing plan to developing three pillars for a competitive ASEAN.

