



ASEAN SOCIO-
CULTURAL COMMUNITY

ASCC

**Hwa Chong Model
ASEAN Summit 2024**



Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	3
Dais Introductions	5
Community Introduction	7
Topic 1: The Question of Preserving Cultural Heritage in ASEAN	8
Topic Introduction	8
Key Terms and Definitions	11
Key Issues	12
Scope of Debate	19
Key Stakeholders	24
Guiding Questions	27
Questions a Declaration Must Answer (QADMA)	27
Bibliography	28
Topic 2: The Question of Improving Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in ASEAN	33
Topic Introduction	33
Key Terms and Definitions	35
Key Issues	37
Scope of Debate	43
Key Stakeholders	47
Guiding Questions	52
Questions a Declaration Must Answer (QADMA)	52
Bibliography	53

Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) of HCMAS 2024! We are Andrew, Eng Kian, Yanyang and Daniel, the directors of this Committee. Congratulations for being allocated to the ASCC, and thank you for being a part of HCMAS 2024. We hope that you are as enthusiastic about the conference as we are.

This year, two pivotal topics will be discussed during the duration of this council – the Question of Preserving Cultural Heritage and the Question of Improving Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in ASEAN. These two topics, whilst tremendously different, reflect important aspects of the ASCC and highlight its broad scope.

The first topic, preserving cultural heritage in ASEAN, is at the forefront of the ASCC's mandate. In such a culturally rich and diverse region as ASEAN, it is not a stretch to say that the region's cultural heritage is an indispensable part of global cultural heritage. Yet, emerging threats such as modernisation and tourism threaten to dilute such a global treasure. It is imperative that delegates find a way to protect and preserve ASEAN's culture.

The second topic, improving disaster management and risk reduction, is perhaps a little less well associated with the ASCC. Nevertheless, the issue is still an extremely pertinent one for ASEAN. ASEAN is the most disaster-prone region in the world, with 3 out of the top 10 most disaster-prone countries in the world being ASEAN member states. Delegates will be challenged to continually improve the region's disaster management and risk reduction.

The dais stresses that this infosheet is merely an appetiser to the buffet of knowledge regarding these two topics (if one even eats appetisers at a buffet). Delegates are reminded that if they are to contribute productively to Community session, they should read up on these topics beyond this infosheet. A good place to start one's research would be in the references of this infosheet.

The dais wishes all delegates good luck for HCMAS. ASEAN is our backyard, and a good grasp of the complex topics the bloc discusses, the dais feels, is crucial and vital. We hope

that debate will be productive and meaningful, and above all, that delegates will have a fun and enjoyable HCMAS experience. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us at ascc.hcmas2024@gmail.com. See you at the conference!

Warmest regards,

Andrew Tham, Kim Eng Kian, Lei Yanyang and Daniel Chew

Dais of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

Dais Introductions

Tham Qi Yi Andrew (Director)

Andrew's sleep schedule is, in a word, complicated. On one hand, the Sec 4 Humanities Student has no trouble at all waking up at 3.00 am to catch the United States Grand Prix (though the disgruntled tifosi will undoubtedly watch Max Verstappen win), or staying up until 4 to write a study guide through sheer willpower alone. On the other, he seems to have trouble staying awake when learning pretty much anything during Physics class, no matter how early he sleeps the day before, no matter how many teas he downs. He hopes delegates (and himself) will be able to stay wide awake during council sessions so that exciting and fruitful debate might commence.

Kim Eng Kian (Assistant Director)

An overclocked S4 Science student, Eng Kian tells himself that he will sleep by 10pm everyday, but always fails to meet this goal. In his 4 year struggle against Higher Chinese, he tells himself that he will get a decent grade this time, unfortunately, this vision has yet to come to fruition. As a first-time chair, Eng Kian hopes that delegates will achieve the goals they have set for themselves in this conference, unlike himself. He hopes that delegates will walk away from this conference, enriched and having fulfilled the targets they have set for themselves, be it aiming high and going for an award, making new friends, learning new things or just having fun.

Lei Yanyang (Assistant Director)

A responsible and upright S4 Humanities student, Yanyang has mastered the art of paraphrasing ChatGPT content. In his almost nonexistent free time, he copes by critiquing historical figures after reading the first two lines of their Wikipedia pages. Yanyang's favourite historical figures to critique include Enver Hoxha, Henry Kissinger and Leonid Brezhnev, while some of his most advanced vocab include 'imperialist', 'hypocrite' and 'lackey'. As a sigma, Yanyang also enjoys daydreaming during Math lessons and sleeping on the MRT. As a first-time chair, Yanyang looks forward to engaging, intellectual, dynamic, thought-provoking, analytical, energetic, constructive, educational, articulate and competitive debate, and hopes that delegates will have a great time.

Chew Cheng-En Daniel (Community Member)

A Secondary 2 consortium councillor, debater, tennis player, and of course an occasional MUN delegate, Daniel somehow manages to squeeze out time to watch Golden State Warriors basketball games and play Roblox with friends. As an academic overachiever, Daniel has decided that grinding day and night for grades is suboptimal compared to numerous hours of work to chair his first Hwa Chong Model ASEAN Summit. Daniel holds extremely strong views on United States politics, and believes that both the Democrat and Republican parties are long past hopeless. He sincerely hopes that delegates will not roleplay Congress, so civil, fun, and fruitful discussions can take place.

Community Introduction

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) is one of the three pillars of ASEAN. ASCC's main objective is to strengthen and promote the social, cultural and human dimensions of ASEAN cooperation. Its primary focus is building a unified, inclusive and sustainable ASEAN community. ASCC seeks to strengthen the sense of ASEAN identity among the people of Member States. This is carried out through advocacy and understanding of culture, history, traditions and cultural diversity in ASEAN. ASCC also aims to improve the quality of life of the ASEAN community through promoting fair and equitable access to health, education, employment, housing and other social services. ASCC values and promotes cultural diversity among ASEAN countries. This entails supporting the advocacy of art, literature, performances, and the preservation of cultural heritage and historical sites. In addition, ASCC is committed to protecting children's rights and enhancing the well-being of families in ASEAN. This includes child protection, child education, and the promotion of gender equality. ASCC supports women's empowerment and gender equality in ASEAN in aspects including but not limited to women's participation in decision-making, equal access to education and economic opportunities, and the elimination of violence against women. Last but not least, ASCC also has a focus on protecting and preserving the environment in the ASEAN region. This covers issues such as water management, waste management, nature conservation, and tackling climate change. Through cooperation within the ASCC, ASEAN countries seek to build a just, inclusive and sustainable society across the region. ASEAN hopes to achieve balanced and comprehensive development throughout the region by strengthening the social, cultural and human dimensions.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) was initiated in 2003 as part of the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community 2009-2015. ASCC implementation takes place in several phases, intending to strengthen the social, cultural and human dimensions of ASEAN cooperation. By achieving these goals, ASCC hopes to build an inclusive, just and sustainable community where every citizen can enjoy a better quality of life and have equal access to opportunities and development benefits.

Topic 1: The Question of Preserving Cultural Heritage in ASEAN

Topic Introduction

As ASEAN has undergone rapid and substantial change in the past few decades, the issue of the preservation of cultural heritage has come into play. But what exactly falls under the umbrella of cultural heritage? According to UNESCO, it refers to artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, and museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historical, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater) and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural, and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments.¹ Cultural heritage serves as invaluable relics of the past, allowing us to revisit and appreciate the depths of our vibrant cultural history.

The ASEAN region has been described as a melting pot of cultures. As an Archipelago with expansive coasts, the region has always been home to a large volume of maritime trade, with its inhabitants depending on the ocean for their survival. Trade began in Southeast Asia as early as 1500 BCE when the Austronesian people in the Malay archipelago began trading with India, Sri Lanka and later China. Around the same time, other societies such as the Khmer began to develop. The maritime trade networks allowed many religions to spread into Southeast Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The Straits region remained relatively undisturbed even during the age of colonialism partly due to the numerous agreements between regional authorities and colonial authorities in the Malayan region, allowing the cultures in the region to further develop. Coming out of the era of colonialism, the Southeast Asian countries found themselves in need of development, hence, the ASEAN, or Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to accelerate economic development.² Since then, the ASEAN member states have developed to different levels of success, however, in the process of development, the rich cultural heritage of ASEAN has sustained some damage from unsustainable practices and other issues. There have been individual efforts by different countries to protect cultural heritage, however, these efforts are insufficient. It is now up to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community to prevent further damage to cultural heritage in

¹ "Cultural Heritage." [UNESCO UIS, September 12, 2023. https://uis.unesco.org/node/3079731.](https://uis.unesco.org/node/3079731)

² "The Founding of ASEAN," [Association of Southeast Asian Nations. accessed February 11, 2024. https://asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/.](https://asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/)

ASEAN while ensuring that its actions do not stunt the economic development of member states, and adhere to the principle of non-interference.³

Some of the steps taken by ASEAN in the past include signing the Declaration on Cultural Heritage,⁴ which provided a framework that member states can follow to protect cultural heritage. This framework includes recommendations on improvements to domestic policies, as well as suggestions on how ASEAN member states should collaborate on the issue of cultural heritage.

However, many of the solutions proposed in the ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage involve multi-stakeholder partnerships, which may be difficult to pull off, having their success hinged on whether ASEAN member states can cooperate or additional stakeholders well. Some of the solutions proposed have come to fruition, such as through the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Socio-Cultural Partnership.⁵ The declaration has also sought the prevention of the illicit transfer of cultural property, which has been achieved, such as when Cambodia cooperated with the United States to retrieve stolen antiques. Due to this cooperation, dozens of antiques that were trafficked illicitly have been returned to Cambodia, including 30 antiques in 2022.⁶

However, other guidelines in the framework have not seen much success. For example, even though the declaration recognises the intellectual property rights of local communities when it comes to cultural practices, in practice, local communities have not been adequately protected, and their access to their heritage has even been threatened many times. In Indonesia, almost a quarter of South Sumatra's forests have been destroyed due to the

³ "What We Do," Association of Southeast Asian Nations, accessed February 11, 2024, <https://asean.org/what-we-do/>.

⁴ "ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage," Association of Southeast Asian Nations, July 25, 2000, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Declaration-on-Cultural-Heritage.pdf>.

⁵ "ASEAN, Korea to Enhance Socio-Cultural Exchange," Association of Southeast Asian Nations, November 14, 2016, <https://asean.org/asean-korea-to-enhance-socio-cultural-exchange/>.

⁶ Julia Jacobs and Tom Mashberg, "U.S. Returns 30 Looted Antiquities to Cambodia," The New York Times, August 8, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/08/arts/us-cambodia-looted-antiquities.html>.

expansion of extractive industries like palm oil production.⁷ This has threatened the cultural practices of the forest communities living there.

Since the adoption of the Declaration on Cultural Heritage, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community has worked to implement solutions based on the guidelines set out by the declaration. It is now up to the delegates of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community to make sure that these solutions are effective in preserving cultural heritage and align with the interests of all ASEAN member states.

⁷ Taufik Wijaya, "For Forest Communities in Sumatra, Loss of Nature Means Loss of Culture," Mongabay Environmental News, November 9, 2021, <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/11/for-forest-communities-in-sumatra-loss-of-nature-means-loss-of-culture/>.

Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Modernisation	Modernisation is a process by which modern scientific knowledge is introduced into the society with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better and more satisfactory life in the broadcast sense of the term as accepted by the society in concern. ⁸
Globalisation	Globalisation means the speedup of movements and exchanges (of human beings, goods, services, capital, technologies or cultural practices) all over the planet. One of the effects of globalisation is that it promotes and increases interactions between different regions and populations around the globe. ⁹
Urbanisation	The process of making an area more urban.
Industrialisation	The development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale.

⁸ Darlong, Joel Lalengliana. "Modernization." Sociology, March 20, 2021. <https://www.sociologylens.in/2021/03/modernization.html#:~:text=Alatas.,accepted%20by%20the%20society%20concerned%E2%80%9D>.

⁹ "Globalization." Education. Accessed February 11, 2024.

Key Issues

Unregulated urbanisation, industrialisation and development

As the economies of ASEAN have grown, unregulated urbanisation, industrialisation and development presents a real and serious threat to cultural practices, customs and artefacts as land and resources are used for agricultural / economic activities. Unregulated urbanisation, industrialisation and development refers to the rapid and unplanned expansion of cities, urban areas and industries without proper oversight, planning, or regulation by authorities. This phenomenon often occurs due to various factors such as population growth, rural-to-urban migration, lack of effective urban planning mechanisms, weak governance, and inadequate infrastructure. In unregulated expansion, new settlements, residential areas, and commercial zones emerge haphazardly, occurring at the detriment of available resources and posing an immediate challenge to the preservation of the surrounding environment.

One example is the rapid industrialisation and development of the Mekong River in Laos. Laos, as a largely agrarian country with around 85% of her labour population dedicated to farming and agriculture contributing 51% to the economy has in recent years attempted to rapidly urbanise and modernise the nation.¹⁰ Currently, Laos has more than 70 operational dams with a total generating capacity of 8,880 MW, of which two are on the Mekong's mainstream. Seven more are in various stages of planning on the mainstream. According to Stimson's Mekong Infrastructure Tracker, around 30 dams are under construction across Laos, and over 200 are planned. Over the past 20 years, Laos has greatly expanded its hydropower in a bid to become the "battery of Southeast Asia"¹¹, becoming one of the main driving forces of future Laotian economic development.

However, at the same time, this rapid pace of development has also posed challenges and risks to the Laotian populations who rely on the river as a source of livelihood. The construction of the dam has become a source of concern for the Laotian population and

¹⁰ "Laos: A Country Study." The Library of Congress. Accessed February 12, 2024. <https://www.loc.gov/item/95017235/>.

¹¹ Ming, Li Tong. "Opinion: Energy Importers Must Consider True 'Sustainability' of Laos Hydropower." The Third Pole, n.d. <https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/energy/opinion-energy-importers-must-consider-true-sustainability-laos-hydropower/#:~:text=Currently%2C%20Laos%20has%20more%20than.of%20planning%20on%20the%20mainstream.>

international organisations dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage. As the World Wildlife Fund's Mekong specialist Marc Goichot reports, "The erosion of the Mekong and Nam Khan river banks, and increased flooding, are aggravated by the backwater of the Xayaburi dam which endangers the natural landscape and cultural assets of the world heritage." The continued development of the Mekong River represents a growing threat on the UNESCO World Heritage site of Luang Prabang¹² which is a culturally significant and historically rich city renowned for its well-preserved architecture and culture. Losing this heritage would be catastrophic as it would not only erase centuries of cultural legacy but also disrupt the lives of local people reliant on cultural practices.

Yet, a complete cessation of works on Mekong development is out of the question, given its significance in the Laotian economic development plan. In an ever changing and uncertain world, nations cannot afford to lose sight of economic development. However, when unrestrained, economic development disrupts cultural heritage protection, for example, the damage of cultural sites as a result of irresponsible use of natural resources, displacement of communities from their homes, as well as competitive economic conditions sidelining and disrupting cultural economic practices (cultural food, arts, and the like). Evidently, the potential of (unrestrained) economic development to worsen the problem of cultural loss is an issue that must not be ignored. Hence, delegates must come up with solutions that are able to accommodate and address both economic and cultural heritage problems

Lack of prioritisation of cultural preservation

Despite the presence of numerous laws and regional declarations, inadequate action and negligence on the issue further threatens the already fragile cultural heritage of many communities. This inadequate action is largely due to the prioritisation of other issues like economic development and education over cultural preservation. The lack of effort from ASEAN member states on the issue of cultural preservation compared to other issues reduces the effectiveness of existing ASEAN efforts such as the ASEAN Declaration on Cultural

¹² Fawthrop, Tom. "Hydropower vs Heritage: Will Laos Lose Luang Prabang?" – The Diplomat. Accessed February 11, 2024. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/12/hydropower-vs-heritage-will-laos-lose-luang-prabang/>.

Heritage. Although ASEAN nations agree on the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage, many are unwilling to take the trade offs certain solutions would bring.

One example of this is Malaysia. Despite Malaysia's status as one of the richest countries in Asia, with a GDP per capita of approximately 12000 USD,¹³ Malaysia still suffers from cultural loss as a result of a lack of attention paid to cultural preservation. Despite possessing a significant amount of resources compared to other countries in Asia, there are only about 132 museums in all of Malaysia,¹⁴ a meagre number of museums relative to its population of roughly 34 million,¹⁵ roughly equating to about 4 museums per 1 million people. This is a result of Malaysia's prioritisation of other areas such as education, infrastructure and defence, with RM 58.7 million allocated to education alone in 2024.¹⁶

When it comes to cultural preservation, countries may not place as much emphasis on it as it does not directly affect a country's development and is unlikely to be an existential threat, whereas other areas like education can directly impact a country's degree of success. This may cause the preservation of cultural heritage to be sidelined, receiving less resources and attention compared to other issues. Due to the dynamic nature of societies, influenced by factors such as globalisation, technology, urbanisation, and environmental changes, requires ongoing and consistent action to protect and promote indigenous cultures. Preserving cultural heritage is not a one-time effort but an ongoing commitment to ensuring the resilience and vitality of diverse cultural expressions. This requires a large amount of resources, which may be hard to obtain when the preservation of cultural heritage is sidelined. Additionally, because other areas like infrastructure and education improvements bring a larger improvement in the quality of life of citizens, the citizens in a country may also view those areas as areas of higher importance, further spurring the governments in ASEAN member states to allocate more funding to those areas. As such, delegates need to ensure

¹³ "GDP per Capita (Current US\$) - Malaysia," World Bank Open Data, accessed February 11, 2024, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=MY>.

¹⁴ Salleh, Nurul Hamiruddin. "Mixed Methods Approach for the Study of Fire Safety Management in Malaysian Heritage Buildings.," ResearchGate, June 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281061765_Mixed_Methods_Approach_for_the_Study_of_Fire_Safety_Management_in_Malaysian_Heritage_Buildings.

¹⁵ "Population, Total - Malaysia," World Bank Open Data, 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=MY>.

¹⁶ Noris, "Budget 2024 Highlights," Kementerian Kewangan Malaysia, October 13, 2023, <https://www.mof.gov.my/portal/en/news/press-citations/budget-2024-highlights#:~:text=Themed%20%22Reformasi%20Ekonomi%2C%20Memperkasakan%20Rakyat.RM2%20billion%20in%20contingency%20savings.>

that continuous actions are taken actively and concretely, while not interfering with other priorities ASEAN member states may have.

The issue of prioritisation of other areas over cultural preservation may affect developing countries disproportionately, as these developing countries already have limited economic resources and may be facing many concurrent challenges, such as high infant mortality rates, low literacy rates and poor public infrastructure. Developing countries often opt to allocate more resources to these issues as the return on investment for the people and the nation is higher. For example, in November 2023, Cambodia's Ministry of Culture had a budget of 9.38 million KHR, whereas its Ministry of Economy and Finance had a budget of 203 million KHR and its Ministry of Defence and Security had a budget of 317 million KHR.¹⁷ With this limited budget, the Cambodian Ministry of Culture may be unable to take concrete actions to preserve cultural heritage.

Natural disasters

At first, natural disasters may not seem directly linked to cultural heritage, but to allow the continued preservation of cultural heritage, it is vital to ensure that ASEAN communities are able to withstand and bounce back from such tragedies. This is especially so due to ASEAN's high susceptibility to natural disasters. From 2004 to 2014, more than 50% of all deaths from natural disasters were in ASEAN.¹⁸

When natural disasters occur, they can cause damage to the homes of communities, disrupting their way of life, often leaving local communities helpless. Damage to cultural heritage as a result of natural disasters comes in the following three forms: physical destruction, displacement of communities, and societal chaos. Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires have the potential to either physically destroy, or greatly damage historical buildings, monuments, artefacts, and archaeological sites, especially those made of more fragile materials such as adobe, wood, or stone, which are particularly susceptible to

¹⁷ "Cambodia Current Budget Expenditure by Ministry," CEIC, accessed February 11, 2024, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/cambodia/current-budget-expenditure-by-ministry>.

¹⁸ "Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance," Association of Southeast Asian Nations, accessed February 11, 2024, <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/disaster-management-humanitarian-assistance/>.

collapse or damage during natural disasters. In addition, damaged infrastructure, terrain erosion and other changes to the environment also make restoring physical cultural sites difficult. As a result of the physical damage to both man-made and natural structures, natural disasters often result in communities evacuating or relocating, leading to the abandonment of cultural heritage sites. Displaced populations are often unable to return to their homes and ancestral lands, resulting in the loss of cultural practices and customs. As a result of physical damage to the environment and massive outflows of people, there is often a lack of societal order in places ravaged by natural disasters. As such, illicit activities, such as illegal logging, vandalism, and theft of property, are likely to prosper in such areas. In such an environment where laws pertaining to the preservation of heritage protection are unable to be enforced effectively, opportunistic criminals may make use of such chaos to profit off cultural heritage sites, damaging such sites and hindering future efforts to protect cultural heritage.

One example of how natural disasters may affect cultural heritage was during the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. The tsunami caused 61000 fatalities in the city of Banda Aceh, which was roughly 25% of the city's population. This tsunami devastated the local community and heavily impacted the local cultural heritage. There have been efforts by ASEAN member states to combat the impact of natural disasters, such as through providing relief for disaster victims. In Aceh, The Aceh Documentation and Information Center, known for its collection of rare books and manuscripts chronicling the heritage of Aceh, was destroyed. Only half of the building remained standing, and the entire collection was swept away. A team from the National Library of Indonesia visiting in January 2005 was able to salvage only three books and one sheet of the genealogy of the Muslim kings of Aceh.¹⁹ The Provincial Archives Agency lost 80 percent of the photographs in its collection, while the Secretariat Office of Aceh Province lost 160 boxes of records.²⁰ In Sri Lanka, Sixty-eight libraries affiliated with religious institutions and at least three museums were damaged by the tsunami.²¹ Many of these libraries were attached to Buddhist temples and contained valuable collections of palm leaf manuscripts and documents relating to Ayurveda, the Indian medical tradition adopted in

¹⁹ ALA | Tsunami-Report from Indonesia (Archived June 5, 2011, at the Wayback Machine)

²⁰ Utomo, Djoko. *Recovering from the tsunami: The consequences for record keeping*.

²¹ Premila Gemage and Maria Cotera. (2005). Rising from the rubble: The Sri Lanka Library Association rehabilitation project. *Impact*:50-52.

ancient Sri Lanka.²² The National Maritime Museum in Galle lost 90 percent of its collection, mostly artefacts salvaged from underwater wrecks and archaeology sites.²³ In order to ensure that cultural heritage is not affected by natural disasters, there is a need to assist affected areas by providing them with medical aid, economic aid, etc. This is so as to help the communities struck by disasters to recuperate and resume their normal way of life, so as to ensure cultural heritage is not permanently destroyed. For example, after a 7.5 magnitude earthquake and tsunami struck Indonesia in 2018, 37 million dollars were allocated to help the local community recover.

Criminal activities

When it comes to cultural heritage, criminal activities exacerbate the damage done by already harmful issues, while bringing about problems of their own. Firstly, criminal activities can divert resources from the already limited resource base allocated to preserving cultural heritage. Rampant corruption decreases the capital available to spend on preserving cultural heritage, thus rendering cost-heavy solutions unfeasible. For example, in 2018, it was found that the Laotian government lost 30 million dollars to corruption.²⁴ Many ASEAN countries still continue to score badly on the Corruption Perceptions Index,²⁵ highlighting the ineffectiveness and inadequacies of many of ASEAN's governments. More resources will also have to be diverted to the relevant authorities to aid them in nabbing criminals. As such, crime reduces the already limited resources available for preserving cultural heritage and mitigates the efforts of cultural preservation.

Secondly, criminal activities can threaten the very existence of cultural heritage. The defacing of cultural artefacts damages them, often to a point where they are unrecoverable, while the illicit trade of cultural artefacts removes cultural artefacts from their original community. The removal and damage of cultural artefacts in turn damages the sustainability

²² "Amarasiri, Upali. (2005). "Tsunami affected libraries in Sri Lanka: Rebuilding process and challenges."" (PDF).

²³ International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). (2005, January 27). Libraries completely missing: Tsunami and Sri Lanka's East Coast. Retrieved October 18, 2006, from "Tsunami and Sri Lanka's East Coast". Archived from the original on February 5, 2017.

²⁴ "Corruption Still Rife in Laos Despite Continued Crackdown Efforts," Radio Free Asia, December 21, 2018, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/laos-corruption-12212018133115.html>.

²⁵ "2022 Corruption Perceptions Index," Transparency International, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/irl>.

of cultural heritage by making it harder for cultural practices and knowledge to be passed down from one generation to the next. The recovery of stolen cultural artefacts also poses a challenge. Due to the smuggling and illicit sale of cultural artefacts, oftentimes, the artefacts of one nation may end up being possessed by overseas organisations or individuals such as museums, private collectors, etc.. The process of retrieving such lost cultural artefacts requires long processes of negotiation, as well as resources to retrieve or buy back artefacts, becoming a challenge, especially to nations with limited finances dedicated to cultural preservation. Additionally, people who possess these artefacts may be unwilling to return them.

One example of this is the looting and illicit trade of Javanese cultural artefacts. In recent years, the endangered status of culture, especially in nations like Cambodia and China, has become a more and more prominent topic. However, even now, the looting of Javanese cultural artefacts, dating back to the 1960s, still continues, fuelled by corruption in the Indonesian Ministry of Stability and liberal art sales laws in Singapore.²⁶ As a result, the looting and regionwide sale and transport of Javanese artefacts have mostly continued unhindered, despite its endangered status.

Another prominent example is that of Douglas Latchford trafficking and selling Cambodian artefacts that were stolen from historical sites in Cambodia. In total, over 30 such artefacts were found in American museums, with more found in other countries around the world. When artefacts are illegally removed from their original communities, it can make it harder to educate younger generations in those communities about their culture's history and roots, reducing the sustainability of cultural heritage.

To stop the further loss of cultural artefacts, concrete steps must be taken, not only in the aforementioned nations, but also in the wider ASEAN region, to prevent the proliferation of an illegal regional artefact trade.

²⁶ "Historic Javanese Art Treasures Victims of Looting." Forbes, June 6, 2013. <https://www.forbes.com/2002/04/03/0403hot.html?sh=7d87b0e775f6>.

Scope of Debate

Prioritisation of the preservation of cultural heritage

One of the most pressing issues of discourse is the prioritisation of the preservation of cultural heritage. The development of the nation (in both societal and economic sectors) is seen by all nations as one of, if not the main focus of the government and oftentimes, attempts at cultural preservation is at odds with it.

Although socio-economic development and cultural preservation are not necessarily dichotomies, this cannot be said for developing countries. In developing countries, where the economy is comparatively weaker and a significant percentage of its population live in poverty, their governments view urbanisation and the development of the nation as a more pressing and important concern than the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, due to the lack of incentives to preserve cultural heritage, this attitude is also carried by the citizens of these nations, whose interests lie in their own livelihoods. This further reinforces government inaction on the issue in order to avoid angering the general population. Consequently, a blind eye is turned to practices which could potentially damage (mostly tangible) cultural heritage in a bid for more rapid urbanisation and development.

On the flip side, we have developed countries²⁷ which have ample resources and a population that looks more favourably upon preserving their own cultural heritage. Hence, their governments place a greater emphasis on and prioritise the preservation of cultural heritage. Furthermore, the conditions within their nations, including but not limited to the environment and various systems, make cultural preservation all the more realistic and manageable. As such, their governments will be more willing to keep urbanisation and development in check.

This disparity in preservation capabilities and the means to which it should be bridged has been subjected to contention between the relevant parties. Moreover, due to the lack of a general and defined consensus between all ASEAN nations regarding this issue, the protection of cultural heritage is interpreted differently and hence implemented differently across different ASEAN countries, resulting in varying states of preservation of cultural heritage. As such, to further the protection of a joint ASEAN cultural heritage, delegates

²⁷ Nations, United. "Country Insights." Human Development Reports. Accessed February 21, 2024. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>.

should assess and weigh both the importance of socio-economic development, as well as cultural preservation, clearly defining measures to counterbalance, or prevent a loss of cultural heritage as a result of socio-economic development. Delegates can look at means of governments and citizens of nations to place greater priority on cultural preservation be it through financial incentives or education. In this consensus based council, it's all the more important that delegates delicately balance their own interests and that of others'.

Long-term cultural preservation

As of today, there have been numerous laws and regional agreements regarding the issue. Although the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage has many times been reaffirmed by parties involved, such as declarations of support for the preservation of cultural heritage and promises of action in the ASEAN Declaration of Cultural Heritage²⁸ of the year 2000, these statements are mostly vague and unspecific, without providing concrete solutions toward the resolution of the issue. As a result, today, ASEAN action regarding the problem of the preservation of cultural heritage remains modest.²⁹ Given that an increasingly globalised and modernising world presents a possibility of great changes to the socio-economic landscape of a nation in a short period of time, the continued preservation of cultural heritage is becoming a more and more pertinent issue and some of ASEAN's efforts have not kept up with the times. This is the case for the aforementioned Declaration on Cultural Heritage which does not include any solutions regarding the digitalization of ASEAN since it was adopted more than 2 decades ago. Therefore, some revisions are required to ensure that the Declaration on Cultural Heritage stays relevant.

As such, delegates must take into account the relevance of proposed solutions in the future. Hence, delegates will need to make sure that any proposed solutions are feasible and long-term, in order for the continued effectiveness and relevance of ASEAN in the preservation of cultural heritage.

²⁸ ASEAN declaration on cultural heritage. Accessed February 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Declaration-on-Cultural-Heritage.pdf>.

²⁹ ASEAN declaration on cultural heritage. Accessed February 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Declaration-on-Cultural-Heritage.pdf>.

Regional collaboration

Despite a joint ASEAN consensus on the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage, as mentioned earlier, cooperation between ASEAN member states remains modest. Contention on the topic of regional collaboration manifests mainly in terms of differing national interests and economic disparity. The protection of cultural heritage is no doubt something that all ASEAN member states value. However, the extent to which it should be prioritised, the harshness of cultural protection laws, the focus the government should put on the issue, and the like, are things not all ASEAN countries agree on. This, combined with the fact that ASCC is non-legally binding, has essentially limited ASEAN cooperation regarding national cooperation³⁰ between governments. Despite the Declaration on Cultural Heritage proposing regional cooperation as a big strategy for preserving cultural heritage, there has been no significant steps taken to doing so. Particularly, no impactful national and regional networks on cultural heritage have been established despite this being mentioned in the Declaration on Cultural Heritage.

Even though direct armed conflict between ASEAN member states is not imminent, there have been disagreements between ASEAN member states, for example, Malaysian and Indonesian opposition to Myanmar's policy on the Rohingya people, Malaysian - Indonesian territorial disputes as well as ASEAN opposition against the rumoured Thai tunnel in the Kra region to connect the Indian and Pacific Oceans.³¹ Although these conflicts are kept in check by ASEAN mediation and cooperation, if these conflicts were to worsen, this could have a detrimental impact on the status of cooperation between ASEAN member states.

As such, delegates will need to assess whether regional collaboration between governments should be encouraged to enforce a consensus on the issue and ensure concrete and effective action taken, and if so, to what extent and in what forms.

³⁰ Culture and Arts - ASEAN Main Portal Accessed February 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/culture-and-information/>.

³¹ 1 traditional challenges to states: Intra-ASEAN conflicts ... Accessed February 12, 2024. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/singapur/04601/2007-3/edy.pdf>.

Resilience of cultural heritage

Due to the rapid modernisation of countries in ASEAN, as well as the vulnerability of the ASEAN region and its heritage to natural disasters and criminal activities, there is a need to ensure the resilience of cultural heritage, so as to allow cultural heritage to withstand whatever may come its way and recover. Although there have already been efforts to make cultural heritage more resilient, such as through disaster relief, regional collaboration and crackdown on criminal activities, it has become more evident that these efforts are insufficient. Despite the adoption of the Declaration on Cultural Heritage and the solutions within the declaration, there has been continued cultural erosion in many ASEAN member states.³² The insufficiency of the Declaration on Cultural Heritage may stem from ASEAN member states being unwilling to adopt certain solutions to their full extent. For example, the Declaration on Cultural Heritage aimed to integrate culture and development. Although some member states have tried to achieve this, many member states have placed more emphasis on development rather than culture.

The goal of making cultural heritage more resilient is not as simple as implementing more solutions and allocating more funds for the preservation of cultural heritage, as this often interferes with a country's other interests. For example, restricting extractive industries can reduce economic activity in a country and make it harder for the country to develop economically. In 2021, Indonesia's coal exports were worth 28.4 billion USD, a significant sum of money. Slowing down the coal sector in Indonesia would mean decreased revenue, forgoing a significant portion of the income from coal exports. Indonesia faces the same situation with Palm Oil, with its Palm Oil exports being worth 27.3 billion USD in 2021.³³ Some solutions, such as data-sharing to better fight criminal activity in the ASEAN region, may also raise the question of sovereignty. When it comes to preserving cultural heritage, compromises have to be made, which is why some ASEAN member states may be hesitant to adopt certain solutions to preserve cultural heritage. Therefore, contentions arise when discussing what solutions should be used in the preservation of cultural heritage.

³² A. K. M. Ahsan Ullah & Hannah Ming Yit Ho (2021) Globalisation and Cultures in Southeast Asia: Demise, Fragmentation, Transformation, *Global Society*, 35:2, 191-206, DOI: 10.1080/13600826.2020.1747992

³³ "Indonesia (IDN) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners." The Observatory of Economic Complexity. Accessed February 11, 2024. <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/idn>.

It is up to the delegates of ASCC to come up with solutions that are feasible and effective, solutions that do not cause big disruptions to the development of member states and solutions that every member state is willing to adopt and implement. To do so, delegates must find a balance between modernisation and the preservation of cultural heritage and fight pressing issues like natural disasters and criminal activities.

Key Stakeholders

Singapore

Singapore is a highly developed country, with a diverse multicultural population. Being a major port for many centuries, and one of the largest transshipment ports in the world in recent times, Singapore has always had a large influx of expatriates from other parts of the world. Singapore continues to receive a large number of expatriates until now due to people seeking work and business opportunities, which are plentiful in Singapore. This gives Singapore the unique challenge of creating a strong national identity while allowing each culture to thrive.

When it comes to cultural heritage, Singapore does not face many of the challenges that other ASEAN member states face. For example, unlike Singapore's neighbouring countries, Singapore has not experienced any major natural disasters in the last century, apart from floods. Additionally, Singapore has a relatively low crime rate compared to other ASEAN member states. However, as mentioned, there are many distinct cultural groups in Singapore, making it harder to form a strong national identity compared to other ASEAN member states. Therefore, Singapore has to implement solutions that can strengthen its national identity, without infringing on the cultural heritage of the many cultural groups present.

Brunei

Brunei is a rich country, having a GDP per capita of 37 thousand USD in 2022. Despite the large oil and natural gas sector in Brunei, cultural heritage has been well preserved. Brunei has a well-funded Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports which receives a yearly budget of 83 million BND.³⁴ With the Brunei monarchy working to safeguard cultural heritage, many cultural practices and events have remained intact in Brunei, helping the people in Brunei to form a concrete national identity. Brunei has managed to preserve its cultural heritage quite effectively and serves as an example of how other ASEAN member states can seek to do so.

³⁴ Admin. "Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports Focus Strategies." Brunei News Gazette, March 20, 2023.

<https://www.bruneinewsgazette.com/ministry-of-culture-youth-and-sports-focus-strategies/#::~:~:text=After%20approving%20the%20budget%20allocation,of%20Culture%2C%20Youth%20and%20Sports.>

Countries with Medium Human Development

Currently, there are no ASEAN member states categorised under “Low Human Development” in the Human Development Index (HDI), however, there are 4 ASEAN member states, namely Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Philippines, classified under “Medium Human Development” .¹ Although some of these countries, like Laos and Philippines, may have policies geared towards the preservation of cultural heritage, these countries may not have sufficient resources to spend on protecting cultural heritage, as they have other focus areas, such as improvement of infrastructure, provision of education and economic development. Additionally, the pursuit of rapid economic growth can lead to the adoption of unsustainable practices, such as pollutive extraction methods, as seen in the gold mining industry in Laos. In Laos, the rapid expansion of foreign companies has taken land from the locals, which used to be for subsistence farming, and polluted the environment. There have also been reports of locals being mistreated, such as when 50 Laotian villagers were detained by a Chinese mining company and were allegedly beaten after being unable to pay a sum of 500-760 USD to the company.³⁵

Countries with Medium Human Development would likely oppose cultural preservation solutions that are resource intensive, such as the construction of museums, as well as oppose cultural preservation solutions that may stunt economic growth. However, the aforementioned countries would still weigh the issue of cultural preservation and longer term solutions, integrating it into their sustainable development plans, to develop economically in a sustainable manner that also preserves cultural heritage.

Countries with High Human Development

Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam are some of the more developed ASEAN member states. These countries possess more resources compared to the countries with Medium Human Development, and have fewer pressing issues in need of immediate action. Therefore, these MDCs can allocate more resources to preserve cultural heritage, through initiatives such as the construction of museums and the launching of cultural education programs.

³⁵ Lao, RFA. “Chinese Company Releases 50 Lao Villagers Accused of Illegal Gold Mining.” Radio Free Asia, September 11, 2023. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/mining-gold-09112023160223.html>.

However, although these countries are more developed, they have still yet to achieve the highest levels of development, and are likely to still have significant portions of their economy made up of primary and secondary industries. Moreover, some of these countries have already experienced some levels of cultural erosion in their course of development, as a result of certain unsustainable development methods. For example, tourism makes up a big portion of Thailand's economy, contributing to 11.5% of Thailand's GDP in 2019,³⁶ before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in order to grow Thailand's tourism sector, some cultural practices and activities have been replaced by more tourist-oriented activities to appeal to more tourists.

These countries face the challenge of transitioning from the late stages of development into highly developed countries, while ensuring that cultural heritage is not further eroded in this transition. These countries would likely be more accepting of solutions which may affect their economy as compared to countries with Medium Human Development.

³⁶ "Thailand's Tourism Sector Drives Economic Recovery." IHS Markit, March 28, 2023. <https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/mi/research-analysis/thailands-tourism-sector-drives-economic-recovery-mar23.html>.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the ramifications of unsustainable development on ASEAN's cultural heritage and how should we negate them?
2. How much of a priority should the preservation of cultural heritage be and what role would ASEAN have in such a prioritisation?
3. What are some of the factors driving the destruction of ASEAN's cultural heritage and how should we negate them?

Questions a Declaration Must Answer (QADMA)

1. How should ASEAN nations strike a balance between development, urbanisation and protection of cultural heritage?
2. How can ASCC, as a non-legally binding council, act constructively on the issue of cultural preservation?
3. How can ASCC build up the resiliency of cultural heritage?
4. How can, and to what extent should, ASEAN countries collaborate to facilitate the protection of cultural heritage?

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A. K. M. Ahsan Ullah & Hannah Ming Yit Ho (2021) Globalisation and Cultures in Southeast Asia: Demise, Fragmentation, Transformation, *Global Society*, 35:2, 191-206, DOI: 10.1080/13600826.2020.1747992

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Topic 2: The Question of Improving Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in ASEAN

Chairs' Note

It is assumed that the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community deals mainly with cultural matters, such as the Question of Preserving Cultural Heritage in ASEAN. Whilst the ASCC does indeed debate such matters, it also covers a wide range of other topics, some of which may not come as readily to mind. Examples include Information and Media, Social Welfare and Development, Haze, and most importantly for this topic, Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. The chairs hope that the novelty of this topic will allow delegates to truly appreciate the broadness of the ASCC's scope and mandate.

Topic Introduction

ASEAN is one of the most natural disaster-prone regions in the world, with more than 50 per cent of global disaster mortalities occurring in the region from 2004 to 2014³⁷. The rising frequency and intensity of disasters due to climate change have resulted in greater economic loss and an increase in the rate of disaster mortality and the number of displaced populations in the region³⁸. Reducing disaster risks is one of the top priorities of ASEAN to ensure that the region will achieve the target of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The Sendai Framework is the global blueprint to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk. Adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan on 18 March 2015, it outlines 4 priority areas and 7 key targets in line with the Sustainable Development Goals to guide global progress. In line with the UN, ASEAN adopted the framework in 2016. Ideally, all nations should achieve these targets by 2030.

³⁷ASEAN. 2021. "Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance - ASEAN Main Portal." ASEAN Main Portal. October 19, 2021. <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/disaster-management-humanitarian-assistance/>.

³⁸ASEAN. 2021. "Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance - ASEAN Main Portal." ASEAN Main Portal. October 19, 2021. <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-socio-cultural-community/disaster-management-humanitarian-assistance/>.

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), signed in 2005, sets a policy backbone for the ASEAN Member States to enhance their collective efforts in reducing disaster risks and responding to disasters in the region. It is a legally binding instrument emphasising the prevention and mitigation of the impact of disasters, but also the preparedness and response of ASEAN Member States in the event of a disaster. Under AADMER, ASEAN Member States are to share disaster hazards and risk information, conduct regular risk assessments; integrate disaster planning into public policy; conduct regular preparedness exercises; and offer assistance to other member states affected by disasters.

At the operational forefront of disaster management in the region is the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). The AHA Centre functions as the operational arm of ASEAN, playing a pivotal role in coordinating and facilitating regional efforts in disaster management. With its mandate covering resource mobilisation, information management, capacity building, and the maintenance of regional standby arrangements, the AHA Centre complements AADMER by ensuring swift and effective responses to disasters within the ASEAN community. Since then, the AHA Centre has played crucial roles in ASEAN disaster relief operations. Some examples include Cyclone Nargis³⁹ in Myanmar, where rapid response teams were deployed in the first ever AHA Centre operation, and the Central Sulawesi Earthquakes⁴⁰ in 2018, where the AHA Centre housed joint efforts for situational assessment⁴¹ and established impromptu dwellings in the form of hundreds of family tents.

³⁹Papp, Bendegúz. 2023. "An Analysis of ASEAN's Cyclone Nargis 2008 Disaster Diplomacy." *Asian International Studies Review* 24 (1): 25–46. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2667078x-bja10024>.

⁴⁰"Indonesia, Central Sulawesi, M 7.4 Earthquake and Tsunami - Updates - AHA Centre." 2018. AHA Centre. October 3, 2018. <https://ahacentre.org/indonesia-central-sulawesi-m-7-4-earthquake-and-tsunami-updates/>.

⁴¹Irawan, Risdianto. 2018. "SITUATION UPDATE No. 15 - Sulawesi Earthquake - 26 October 2018 - AHA Centre." AHA Centre. November 2, 2018. <https://ahacentre.org/situation-update/situation-update-no-15-sulawesi-earthquake-26-october-2018/>.

Key Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management	The application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risks, reduce existing disaster risks and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses. There are 3 main aspects of Disaster Risk Management: prospective disaster risk management, corrective disaster risk management and compensatory disaster risk management ⁴² .
Prospective disaster risk management	Addressing and avoiding the development of potential future disaster risks. Some examples would include constructing critical infrastructure in areas with less disaster risk or investing in disaster-resistant architecture.
Corrective disaster risk management	It concerns current existing disaster risks. Some examples include the strengthening of existing infrastructure vulnerable to the effects of disaster.
Compensatory disaster risk management	It seeks not to reduce or remove disaster risk but rather strengthen the social and economic resilience of individuals and societies and mitigate the effects of disaster where disaster risk cannot be reduced.

⁴² “Disaster Risk Management.” 2007. UNDRR. August 30, 2007. <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster-risk-management>.

	Examples would include preparedness, response and recovery activities, but also a mix of different financing instruments, such as national contingency funds, insurance and reinsurance.
Disaster Mortality	In this infosheet, disaster mortality regarding the Sendai Framework Targets refers to the number of deaths caused directly by natural disasters by 100,000 people of a certain population.
Legal Instrument	According to the ASEAN Main Portal, the term refers to instruments “by which the consent to be bound is expressed through either signature of the authorised representatives of Member States” or signature “subject to ratification and/or acceptance in accordance with the internal procedures of respective Member States” ⁴³

⁴³“Explanatory Notes.” n.d. <https://agreement.asean.org/explanatory/show.html>.

Key Issues

Regression in Sendai Framework Targets

In 2016, with the introduction of the AADMER Work Programme 2016-2020, ASEAN formally adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The framework highlights 4 priority areas for development in terms of global disaster management: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. It also outlines seven global targets regarding disaster management for better development in the four priority areas (Fig. 1). The targets in question are: A – to reduce global disaster mortality, B – to reduce the number of affected people globally, C – to reduce direct economic loss in relation to Gross Domestic Product, D – to reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, E – to increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, F – to substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries, and G – to increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems⁴⁴. Progress in these targets is measured through 38 indicators⁴⁵.

⁴⁴“What Is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?” 2023. UNDRR. April 4, 2023. <https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/what-sendai-framework>.

⁴⁵“Monitoring the Sendai Framework.” 2022. UNDRR. December 23, 2022. <https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/monitoring-sendai-framework>.

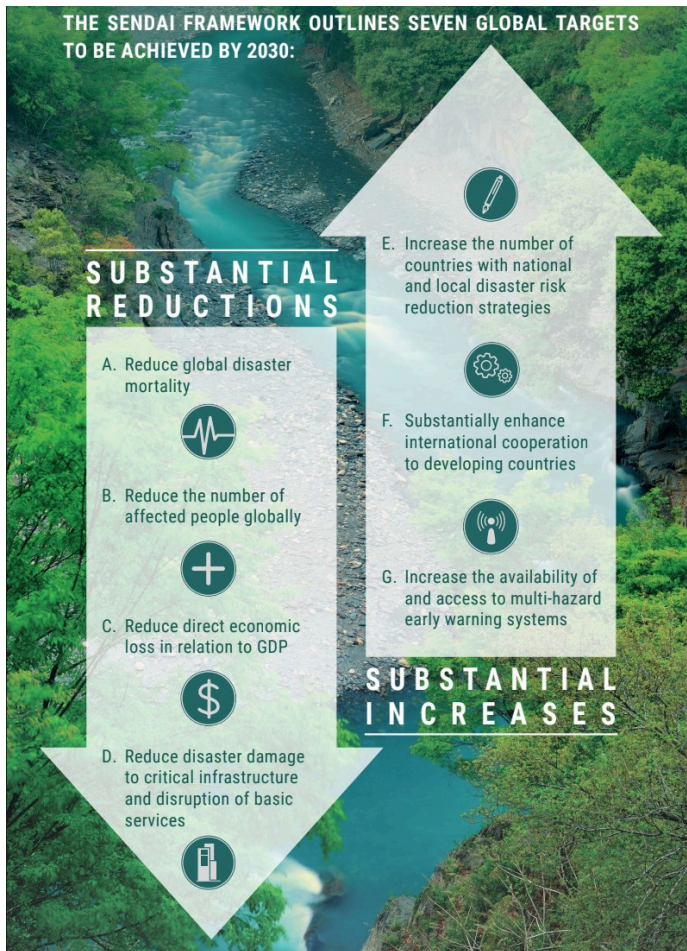


Figure 1: The Sendai Framework’s Seven Global Targets

Ever since AADMER came into force in December 2009, ASEAN has made significant strides toward meeting the Sendai Framework goals. However, although progress has been undeniable, there is still a long way to go. From 2004 to 2014, the region’s total economic loss as a result of natural disasters was US\$91 billion. About 191 million people were displaced temporarily and disasters affected an additional 193 million people. In other words, around one in three to four people in the region were affected by natural disasters⁴⁶.

In some aspects, ASEAN has stalled or even regressed in achieving its Sendai Framework Targets. For example, there has been notable regression in target A – reduction of global mortality. From 1993 to 2003, the rate of disaster mortality in ASEAN was 8 deaths per 100,000 people. From 2004 to 2014, the rate of disaster mortality rose to 61 deaths per

⁴⁶ASEAN. 2024. “ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management - ASEAN Main Portal.” ASEAN Main Portal. January 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/book/asean-vision-2025-on-disaster-management/>.

100,000 people⁴⁷. This regional trend was also reflected in member states. For example, a recent report by the Philippines in 2022 admitted that there had been a “deterioration” in progress for Target A⁴⁸.

Target B has similarly regressed to a certain degree. From 2005 to 2022 in Indonesia, the number of people affected by disasters per 100,000 citizens has increased by 54.37% per year. When comparing the periods of 2005-2015 and 2016-2022, the number of people affected by disasters from 2016 to 2022 was 16.16% higher than that from 2005-2015⁴⁹. Similarly, in Cambodia, the number of people affected by natural disasters is rising. Whilst the number does tend to fluctuate depending on the intensity of the natural disasters, with some years being considerably more destructive than others, the average number is nonetheless rising slowly. For example, in 2001, floods in Cambodia affected 1.6 million people. Ten years later, in 2011, floods affected over 1.7 million people⁵⁰.

In short, unless ASEAN takes further steps to reduce disaster risk, the region is unlikely to achieve all Sendai Framework Targets by 2030. As such, ASEAN must improve its Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the immediate future if it is to meet its 2030 goals.

Flaws within the AHA Centre

Interference via the AHA Centre

Ever since its founding, the policy of non-interference has been a keystone of multinational collaboration within the group. On the surface, this pillar has remained unchallenged, with member states, for instance, rejecting the formation of an ASEAN peace-keeping force in 2003 and some opposing the AICHR’s investigations in some member states⁵¹. However, for

⁴⁷ASEAN. 2024. “ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management - ASEAN Main Portal.” ASEAN Main Portal. January 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/book/asean-vision-2025-on-disaster-management/>.

⁴⁸“Philippines: Voluntary National Report of the MTR SF.” 2022. Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework. October 25, 2022. <https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/publication/philippines-voluntary-national-report-mtr-sf>.

⁴⁹“Indonesia: Voluntary National Report of the MTR SF.” 2022. PreventionWeb. October 25, 2022. <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/indonesia-voluntary-national-report-mtr-sf>.

⁵⁰Cardenas, V. 2023. “Disaster Financial Preparedness Analysis Report.” United Nations Development Programme. Accessed February 2, 2024. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-05/01_Cambodia_Financial%20Preparedness%20Plan_Final_May2023.pdf.

⁵¹Suzuki, Shintaro. 2021. “Interfering via ASEAN? In the Case of Disaster Management.” Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs 40 (3): 400–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211016865>.

such a pivotal principle, the bloc has never provided a formal definition of “non-interference”. Closer examination reveals that member states in the past have indeed, to some degree, interfered with the affairs of other member states, albeit with the knowledge and acceptance of the targeted state, and have even arguably used ASEAN organs, including the AHA Centre, to do so. In 2017, 400,000 people were displaced from Marawi as the Philippines army launched a large-scale effort to root out anti-government groups affiliated with the Islamic State. Malaysia had security interests in the Marawi crisis and intended to engage in the crisis. It initiated a joint sea patrol with Indonesia and the Philippines, followed by a trilateral air patrol to quash the remaining IS forces⁵². While the AHA Centre mostly stuck to the shadows of humanitarian assistance, Malaysia’s active contribution through the AHA Centre in humanitarian assistance demonstrated its eagerness to stop spillover effects and perhaps even convinced the Philippines to permit the joint patrol⁵³. Admittedly, the Philippines was also in urgent need of assistance – it had already admitted that it was not equipped to handle the crisis and had even requested US assistance⁵⁴, along with that from other countries⁵⁵, in fighting the militants. Another, clearer, example of the AHA Centre’s role as a potential avenue for willing interference would be its role in the Myanmar crisis. Following an escalation in the conflict between the Myanmar government and the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in 2017, the Myanmar government faced accusations of genocide and crimes by the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Human Rights Council as more than 700,000 Rohingya were forced to leave the Rakhine state and go to Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh⁵⁶. Seeking to convince the world that it was doing its best to manage the humanitarian crisis associated with this massive population movement, the Myanmar government accepted international assistance from the AHA Centre. Myanmar’s leaders agreed to allow the AHA Centre to enter the country and provide relief services, as long as Centre activities were conducted under government supervision and in cooperation with domestic organisations. Later, Myanmar invited the AHA Centre to dispatch a needs

⁵²Bangkok Post. 2017. “Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines Launch Joint Air Patrols.” <https://www.bangkokpost.com/world/1341396>. October 12, 2017.

⁵³Suzuki, Shintaro. 2021. “Interfering via ASEAN? In the Case of Disaster Management.” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40 (3): 400–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211016865>.

⁵⁴Mogato, Manuel, and Simon Lewis. 2017. “U.S. Forces Assist Philippines in Battle to End City Siege.” *Reuters*, June 10, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN191068/>.

⁵⁵“Canada vows help for Philippines amid Marawi crisis.” n.d. ABS-CBN News. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/16/17/canada-vows-help-for-ph-amid-marawi-crisis>.

⁵⁶Suzuki, Shintaro. 2019. “Why Is ASEAN Not Intrusive? Non-Interference Meets State Strength.” *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 8 (2): 157–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24761028.2019.1681652>.

assessment team to identify possible areas of cooperation in Rakhine State to facilitate the repatriation process. The ASEAN Emergency Response Assessment Team visited Rakhine state “to conduct a needs assessment to identify areas that ASEAN can offer to facilitate the repatriation process”⁵⁷ – an issue closely related to the management of human rights issues and dangerously so to the political question of citizenship and immigration⁵⁸. As the AHA Centre’s role grows and seems increasingly more like a potential organ for limited interference in member states’ affairs, ASEAN must eventually face the question of whether it will abide by its principle of non-interference or turn a blind eye.

Lack of Collaboration with Local Entities

The issue of disaster risk reduction and management in ASEAN reveals a paradox between regional and diplomatic achievements and concrete success at the local level. At the policy level, ASEAN seems to be moving in the right direction towards achieving disaster management goals. The ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) have laid a strong foundation, leading to the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). However, concerns arise regarding the lack of collaboration and reflection of local needs in policy implementation.

A lack of collaboration with local entities results in the AHA Centre and other humanitarian organisations not understanding the situation on the ground. This could look like a failure to recognise underlying tensions and fragilities in communities⁵⁹, or certain intricacies of the affected areas being overlooked. This severely impacts the AHA Centre’s ability to provide efficient and effective humanitarian assistance to those in need.

⁵⁷Thuzar, Moe. 2021. “Commentary: Myanmar on the Cusp of Opening up to Mediation on Rakhine Crisis.” CNA, January 29, 2021. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/commentary/myanmar-rohingya-rakhine-crisis-mediation-third-party-asean-896751>.

⁵⁸Suzuki, Shintaro. 2021. “Interfering via ASEAN? In the Case of Disaster Management.” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40 (3): 400–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211016865>.

⁵⁹Cook, Alistair David Blair. 2017. “World Humanitarian Summit - Implications for the Asia-Pacific.” *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies*, March. <https://researchprofiles.anu.edu.au/en/publications/world-humanitarian-summit-implications-for-the-asia-pacific>.

While ASEAN has actively engaged in global platforms and aligned its commitments with international agendas, there is a growing perception⁶⁰ that the focus on local voices and needs is diminishing. The regional and diplomatic success contrasts with a lack of progress at the national and sub-national levels, creating a disconnect between policy developments and sustainable impacts.¹⁴

Despite the ASEAN Secretariat and AHA Centre adopting global terminology and collaborating with other entities, there has been an observed plateau in local impact. The regional disaster management landscape faces challenges in achieving measurable goals. Meetings are seen as an end, with a lack of action in the following months or years. Recent reports⁶¹ by the AHA Centre indicates a regression in the region's disaster management indicators.

ASEAN is one of the most diverse regions in the entire world, with unique geographical and cultural characteristics. Thus, the current trend of regional entities being dominated by global norms not specifically adapted to ASEAN in the realm of disaster management needs to be reversed, emphasising the original goal of contributing regional perspectives to the global dialogue.

The lack of initiatives reflecting local realities poses a significant risk to sustaining and elevating disaster management policies. Without addressing these challenges, the progress achieved over the past two decades may not be sustained.

⁶⁰“Disaster Management in Southeast Asia: 20 Years of Progress and Challenges.” n.d. @RSIS_NTU. https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/nts/disaster-management-in-southeast-asia-20-years-of-progress-and-challenges/?doing_wp_cron=1706861001.3458969593048095703125.

⁶¹Maginatead, Comms. 2023. “The AHA Centre Annual Report 2022 - AHA Centre.” AHA Centre. November 29, 2023. <https://ahacentre.org/publication/annual-report-2022/>.

Scope of Debate

Meeting the Sendai Framework Targets

Future Courses of Action

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the debate would be to discuss how to accelerate ASEAN's progress towards meeting its 2030 Sendai Framework Targets. It is understood that ASEAN, though it has made impressive progress in Disaster Risk and Reduction Management, nonetheless has some way to go if it is indeed to meet the Sendai Framework Targets by 2030. In the ASEAN Vision 2025 (written in 2015), the Association set out the strategic elements that would shape progress for the next 10 years – Institutionalisation and Communications, Partnerships and Innovations, Finance and Resource Mobilisation⁶² in the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management. In the more recent AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025, Priority Programmes outlined included General Provisions, Disaster Risk Identification, Assessment and Monitoring, Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Disaster Preparedness, Emergency Response, Rehabilitation and Technical Co-operation and Scientific Research⁶³. Despite the presence of such programmes and elements, however, the fact remains that progress is still stagnating, if not regressing. As both the AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025 and the ASEAN Vision 2025 draw closer, delegates must start to think about the next decade. What should be prioritised, and what should be avoided? Delegates must study the successes and failures of the past as they look into the future.

Mobilising Financing

Of course, there is little action without funding. Currently, the AHA Centre has a yearly budget of around US\$1 million. Yet, ASEAN member states only make a voluntary contribution of US\$30,000 a year. The rest of the tab is picked up by partner organisations, such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, or foreign nations, such as the United States⁶⁴. Although donations, both from member states as well as other parties, swell with major natural disasters, it is acknowledged that money is still stretched thin. Considering the

⁶²ASEAN. 2024. "ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management - ASEAN Main Portal." ASEAN Main Portal. January 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/book/asean-vision-2025-on-disaster-management/>.

⁶³Association of Southeast Asian Nations. 2020. "AADMER Work Programme 2021-2025." ASEAN Main Portal. Accessed February 2, 2024. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AADMER-Work-Programme-2021-2025.pdf>.

⁶⁴Reuters. 2015. "SE Asia Emergency Response Team Takes on Region's Deluge of Disasters." Reuters, September 17, 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL5N11M1TR/>.

AHA Centre's growing roles and responsibilities in conjunction with the rising frequency of natural disasters due to global warming, it is clear that AADMER simply needs more funding⁶⁵.

One course of action delegates might consider would be to raise additional funding from members, increasing the annual voluntary contribution member states make. However, the relatively small contribution member states choose to make seems to indicate that the amount is more a token sum than anything else. In addition, beyond a certain quantum, it may not be feasible for certain countries with less advanced economies, or practical for countries with low natural disaster risk, to donate the same amount of money as others. Another option, perhaps, would be cutting expenses from other areas of AADMER activity. However, as AADMER's role in disaster management grows larger, this seems increasingly unfeasible. What then, about reaching out to more partners? Funding from such entities, especially charities and non-profit organisations, fluctuates greatly – incompatible with the AHA centre's growing regular expenses. Weighing these considerations and others, delegates must decide how to best continue.

Reforming the AHA Centre

Addressing Interference via the AHA Centre

On the issue of addressing interference via the AHA Centre, the question is simple: should ASEAN turn a blind eye to the status quo of limited interference happening via the AHA Centre, or should the bloc uphold its principle of non-interference and limit the expansion of the AHA Centre's role?

On one hand, it must be admitted that any such interference is relatively minor, and (as of now) can only happen with the full knowledge and consent of any affected parties. More importantly, there are certain advantages conferred by the status quo. For example, when the AHA Centre ran humanitarian aid operations in Myanmar and facilitated the repatriation of refugees from 2017-2019, the Myanmar government was able to use its permittance of ASEAN involvement to claim that it was doing all it could to help Rohingya refugees in the face of mounting international pressure. Similarly, the Indonesian and Malaysian

⁶⁵ASEAN. 2024. "ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management - ASEAN Main Portal." ASEAN Main Portal. January 11, 2024. <https://asean.org/book/asean-vision-2025-on-disaster-management/>.

governments were able to claim that they were helping to uphold human rights and, as Muslim-majority nations, be seen as helping to protect fellow Muslims⁶⁶. Limited interference, such as in the case of the status quo, may give member states flexibility in their dealings.

On the other hand, it is hard to argue that non-interference is not a crucial aspect of ASEAN. First established in ASEAN's founding document, the Bangkok Declaration, non-interference has been a longstanding principle in ASEAN, so much so that it has become synonymous with "the ASEAN way"⁶⁷. The principle has been preserved intact by member states up till current times, despite several propositions to modify the principle or create more intrusive ASEAN organs. Many argue that the principle has greatly impacted the dynamics within the bloc and allowed them to focus on nation-building and the economy⁶⁸. It is undeniable that the stability of the bloc can in part be credited to non-interference, and that its loss would change ASEAN dramatically, for better or for worse.

Collaboration with Local Entities

While regional efforts towards Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) have gained traction, a critical gap persists: the chasm between policy frameworks formulated at the summit level and their effective implementation at the local level. In addition, when assessments are made on vulnerabilities, risk and resilience it is important to recognise underlying tensions and fragilities in communities⁶⁹, as the situation on the ground can be vastly different from the data collected and plans made. Thus, collaboration with local entities is a crucial pillar of working towards the Sendai Framework Goals and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Delegates will have to assess how ASEAN can move beyond simply viewing local communities and institutions as recipients of top-down DRRM plans, and

⁶⁶Suzuki, Shintaro. 2021. "Interfering via ASEAN? In the Case of Disaster Management." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40 (3): 400–417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211016865>.

⁶⁷Molthof, Mieke. 2012. "ASEAN and the Principle of Non-Interference." *E-International Relations*. February 13, 2012. <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/02/08/asean-and-the-principle-of-non-interference/>.

⁶⁸Nguyen, Tram-Anh. 2016. "Norm or Necessity? The Non-Interference Principle in ASEAN." *Inquiries Journal*. January 1, 2016. <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1318/norm-or-necessity-the-non-interference-principle-in-asean>.

⁶⁹Cook, Alistair David Blair. 2017. "World Humanitarian Summit - Implications for the Asia-Pacific." *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies*, March. <https://researchprofiles.anu.edu.au/en/publications/world-humanitarian-summit-implications-for-the-asia-pacific>.

work together to empower them as active partners in risk assessment, early warning systems, and resilience building. For example, one way to do this would be to create community risk maps in partnership with local agencies, allowing residents to actively contribute their knowledge and experiences of the disaster hazards and vulnerabilities in that locale.

In addition, the forging of a renewed commitment to multi-stakeholder partnerships and decentralised governance in DRRM across ASEAN will be instrumental in the AHA Centre's collaboration with Local Entities. A crucial means to accomplish this is by engaging with the university research sector at the local level, not only as repositories of local knowledge but also as contributors to locally-led disaster management policies, based on the premise that sustainable answers can be found through working together across different sectors⁷⁰.

Delegates will have to decide how best to forge stronger partnerships between ASEAN and provincial authorities, NGOs, private sector actors, and academic institutions to create a coordinated and efficient DRRM ecosystem. Will a new arm of the AHA Centre be established to work with academic institutions? How will delegates plan to avoid being bogged down by ineffective bureaucratic processes? Clear lines of responsibility and reporting mechanisms will have to be established to guarantee that regional DRRM initiatives translate into tangible results at the local level. These are all questions delegates should think about and work towards solving.

⁷⁰Centre, Aha, and Aha Centre. 2020. "Vol 57 – THE CENTRE FOR NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES AT THE RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES - AHA Centre - The Column." AHA Centre - The Column - The AHA Centre News Bulletin (blog). April 20, 2020. <https://thecolumn.ahacentre.org/posts/partnership/vol-57-the-centre-for-non-traditional-security-studies-at-the-rajaratnam-school-of-international-studies/>.

Key Stakeholders

Recipients of AADMER Aid

Even in the most disaster-prone region in the world, there are still countries that receive disaster aid more frequently than others. Any changes made to AADMER and the AHA Centre and their impacts will be felt the most keenly by these countries. Naturally, these countries would be very invested in ensuring that AADMER and the AHA Centre are functioning at maximum capacity so that when they do eventually experience a natural disaster, the organisations will be able to send sufficient aid and assistance. Currently, out of the top 10 countries at highest risk of natural disasters, 3 are member states in ASEAN⁷¹.

One of these countries is the Philippines. As a result of its geographical location along the Pacific Ring of Fire, the Philippines is highly susceptible to volcanic and seismic activity. The country is also subject to the world record of typhoons every year⁷². In 2023, the Philippines ranked first on the World Risk Index at 46.86 points⁷³. It has been a major benefactor of AADMER aid and assistance, such as in the aftermath of the 2013 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Cebu and Typhoon Haiyan 2 weeks later. As such, whatever changes the AADMER might undertake would have a sizable effect on the Philippines and its disaster management.

Another of these countries is Indonesia. Located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, Indonesia was the second-highest country on the 2023 World Risk Index with 43.50 points⁷⁴. In addition to having around a third of the world's active volcanoes, some of which undergo regular eruptions, Indonesia also experiences frequent earthquakes, most recently the West Sulawesi earthquake in January 2021. The country's monsoon season also means that floods and landslides are common. In 2022 alone, around 897 people were reported killed or missing as a result of natural disasters⁷⁵. As a result of the country's frequent natural disasters, Indonesia

⁷¹Weltrisikobericht. 2023. "WorldRiskReport." Weltrisikobericht. Weltrisikobericht. Accessed February 2, 2024. <https://weltrisikobericht.de/en/#downloads>.

⁷²World Bank Group. 2023. "Towards a Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management System for the Philippines." World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/brief/towards-a-comprehensive-disaster-risk-management-system-for-the-philippines>.

⁷³Weltrisikobericht. 2023. "WorldRiskReport." Weltrisikobericht. Weltrisikobericht. Accessed February 2, 2024. <https://weltrisikobericht.de/en/#downloads>.

⁷⁴Weltrisikobericht. 2023. "WorldRiskReport." Weltrisikobericht. Weltrisikobericht. Accessed February 2, 2024. <https://weltrisikobericht.de/en/#downloads>.

⁷⁵Statista. 2023. "Risk Index for Natural Disasters Indonesia 2023, by Type." September 15, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/920857/indonesia-risk-index-for-natural-disasters/>.

is often a recipient of AADMER aid and relief. One such instance would be AADMER's deployment of emergency response teams to Indonesia in the wake of the 2018 earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi⁷⁶. Hence, Indonesia is a key stakeholder in AADMER.

Contributors to AADMER Aid

On the opposite side of the coin, of course, would be contributors to AADMER aid. It is indeed true that in terms of monetary contributions, at least, all are equal – every ASEAN country makes an annual contribution of US\$ 30,000 a year. Nonetheless, some countries contribute more manpower and effort than others, some countries host more AADMER exercises than others, and some countries receive less returns from AADMER assistance than others. Such countries would have a vested interest in ensuring that their money and resources are being utilised well.

One such country is Singapore. Singapore, unlike Indonesia and the Philippines, rarely experiences natural disasters due to its small land mass and geographically advantageous position. Located at the Southern tip of the Malay peninsula, the island state is mostly sheltered from tsunamis, typhoons, earthquakes and the like⁷⁷. The rarity of natural disasters in Singapore means that Singapore is more often an Assisting Entity rather than a Receiving Party. Besides monetary assistance, Singapore has also been a significant contributor of equipment and manpower in AADMER assistance missions. Other examples of Singapore's contribution include hosting various AADMER workshops and forums to share its expertise, as well as AADMER's mid-term reviews⁷⁸. As a major contributor to AADMER, Singapore would be vested in ensuring its efforts and resources are utilised to the maximum effect.

⁷⁶Aseansc. 2019. "ASEAN on Disaster Management: Earthquake and Tsunami in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia." May 12, 2019. <https://asc.fisipol.ugm.ac.id/2018/12/21/asean-disaster-management-earthquake-tsunami-central-sulawesi-indonesia/>.

⁷⁷"Asian Disaster Reduction Center(ADRC)." n.d. <https://www.adrc.asia/nationinformation.php?NationCode=702&Lang=en&NationNum=07>.

⁷⁸Association of Southeast Asian Nations. 2023. "CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE ELEVENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT (AMMDM) AND TWELFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP) TO THE ASEAN AGREEMENT ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (AADMER)." ASEAN Main Portal. Accessed February 2, 2024. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Chairman-Statement-of-11th-AMMDM-and-12th-COP-to-AADMER_adopted.pdf.

Countries with Strong Stances on Interference

With discussion of interference on the table, council debate is likely to stir up some strong emotions from varying countries. Needless to say, in line with ASEAN's principle of non-interference, there will be countries that vehemently oppose the idea of interference. Reasons for opposing interference can range from wishing to minimise international attention on internal affairs to an unpleasant history with foreign interventions to a simple commitment to a strong government with minimal foreign influence. These countries are likely to be incredibly vocal against any form of interference in the AHA Centre.

One example would be the Philippines. The Philippines has long been wary of foreign interference in its matters⁷⁹. It has rejected several proposals that would make ASEAN more intrusive in the past and has often decried what it sees as incidents of interference by foreign bodies or states, such as China, the European Union, the United States, and even the United Nations⁸⁰. This stance is unlikely to change soon, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr declaring, "We [the Philippines] are a sovereign nation with a functioning government. We do not need to be told by anyone how to run our own country." "There is no room for negotiation there. It is sacred, inviolable."⁸¹

Nonetheless, some countries also would support interference on a reasonable level via the AHA Centre. Whilst such countries do aim to further their interests abroad, they also highlight legitimate benefits of limited interference, such as being able to further uphold human rights.

Indonesia is one such country. Indonesia has also had a long history of interest in the issue of interference. The country has expressed growing support for intrusive initiatives both within ASEAN and on the global stage. In 2014, Indonesia was ranked as the 17th largest troop

⁷⁹Ramcharan, Robin. 2000. "ASEAN and Non-Interference: A Principle Maintained." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22 (1): 60–88. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25798479>.

⁸⁰Fernandez, Gemmo. 2020. "How the Philippine Government Gets the Concept of 'Intervention' Wrong." *The Diplomat*, January 8, 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/how-the-philippine-government-gets-the-concept-of-intervention-wrong/>.

⁸¹Morales, Neil. 2022. "Philippines' Marcos Vows to Thwart Interference from Outside Powers." *Reuters*, May 26, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-marcos-vows-thwart-interference-outside-powers-2022-05-26/>.

contributor to UN Peacekeeping Operations, with just under 1700 personnel participating⁸². Ten years later, Indonesia has risen to become the 8th largest troop contributor to UN Peacekeeping Operations, with more than 2700 personnel participating in 9 operations⁸³. Closer to home, Indonesia has long been a proponent of an ASEAN peacekeeping force, first raising the issue in 2003⁸⁴. Though the proposal was rejected by the other member states, it led to the establishment of the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network in 2011. This aimed to promote cooperation among the armed forces of member states through shared experiences, expertise, and related peacekeeping capacities⁸⁵. Indonesia has also been extremely vocal in supporting the expansion of the AHA Centre's roles, including those allowing it to function as a medium for interference.

With some countries, however, stances are much less clear. Many countries do not necessarily hold a definite stance but rather support or oppose interference on a case-by-case basis. This might reflect the shifting interests on varying topics, or simply the level of interference in each case.

An example would be Singapore. Singapore has generally maintained an intolerant attitude towards interference in ASEAN. The nation-state has emphasised that despite Myanmar's 2021 coup d'état, ASEAN can not interfere in the country's affairs⁸⁶. Despite this official tone, Singapore's actions, including verbal condemnation of the Myanmar government, ceasing

⁸²Thayer, Carl. 2014. "ASEAN and UN Peacekeeping." *The Diplomat*, April 25, 2014. <https://thediplomat.com/2014/04/asean-and-un-peacekeeping/>.

⁸³"Rotation of UN Peacekeeping Mission Troops Use Garuda Indonesia National Airline for the First Time | Portal Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia." n.d. <https://kemlu.go.id/portal/en/read/4524/berita/rotation-of-un-peacekeeping-mission-troops-use-garuda-indonesia-national-airline-for-the-first-time>.

⁸⁴Wpadmin. 2016. "Is It Time for a Peacekeeping Force for ASEAN?" *The Asia Foundation*. April 3, 2016. <https://asiafoundation.org/2016/02/03/is-it-time-for-a-peacekeeping-force-for-asean/>.

⁸⁵Thalang, Chanintira Na, and Pinn Siraprasiri. 2016. "ASEAN's (Non-) Role in Managing Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia: Obstacles to Institutionalization." *Institutionalizing East Asia*, 155–80. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313061031_ASEAN's_non-role_in_managing_ethnic_conflicts_in_Southeast_Asia_Obstacles_to_institutionalisation.

⁸⁶Lim, Kimberly, and Kimberly Lim. 2023. "Asean Has No Licence to Interfere in Myanmar's Internal Affairs: Singapore." *South China Morning Post*, February 27, 2023. https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3211707/asean-has-no-licence-interfere-myanmar-s-internal-affairs-singapore?campaign=3211707&module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article.

arms sales to Myanmar⁸⁷ and cutting off some banking ties⁸⁸, reflect a nuanced approach toward the question of interference in ASEAN.

⁸⁷Baharudin, Hariz. 2023. "S'pore Does Not Ban Trade with Myanmar, but Prevents Some Sale of Items That Can Hurt Civilians: Vivian." The Straits Times, July 4, 2023. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/s-pore-does-not-ban-trade-with-myanmar-but-prevents-sale-of-items-that-can-hurt-civilians-vivian>.

⁸⁸Kit, Leong Wai. 2023. "Global Community Steps up Financial Pressure on Myanmar's Military Junta." CNA, September 1, 2023. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/global-community-steps-financial-pressure-myanmar-military-junta-international-sanctions-singapore-bank-uob-3740016>.

Guiding Questions

1. Why are current AADMER and ASEAN efforts insufficient in meeting the Sendai Framework Targets? How should we change our course in order to meet those targets?
2. What are the possible ramifications of allowing the AHA Centre to continue as an organ for consented interference in ASEAN member states?
3. What challenges are current efforts to collaborate with local entities on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management facing, and how can they be resolved?

Questions a Declaration Must Answer (QADMA)

1. How should member states modify existing plans so as to meet the Sendai Framework Targets by 2030?
2. How should the ASCC address the issue of interference via disaster risk reduction and management, if they should?
3. How should member states increase and extend current collaboration with local entities for disaster risk reduction and management?

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- Association of Southeast Asian Nations. 2023. "CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT OF THE ELEVENTH MINISTERIAL MEETING ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT (AMMDM) AND TWELFTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP) TO THE ASEAN AGREEMENT ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (AADMER)." ASEAN Main Portal. Accessed February 2, 2024. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Chairman-Statement-of-11th-AMMDM-and-12th-COP-to-AADMER_adopted.pdf.

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Baharudin, Hariz. 2023. "S'pore Does Not Ban Trade with Myanmar, but Prevents Some Sale of Items That Can Hurt Civilians: Vivian." The Straits Times, July 4, 2023.
<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/s-pore-does-not-ban-trade-with-myanmar-but-prevents-sale-of-items-that-can-hurt-civilians-vivian>.

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