

Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN (“FairBiz”)
Sustaining and Upscaling a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN
24 November 2022 in Bangkok

SESSION OUTLINE

Session 4: Diversity and Inclusion as drivers of economic growth

15:00 – 16:30 Bangkok time

Background

In 2018 UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub has launched a regional project Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN (“FairBiz”) to improve business integrity and transparency in public procurement. With the generous support of the UK Government ASEAN Economic Reform Program, the initiative partnered with governments, the private sector, and civil society in seven countries: Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar¹, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam focusing on four areas of intervention:

1. **Encourage partnerships** between the public and private sectors, as well as civil society and development partners at the regional level, to implement and monitor integrity policies in ASEAN
2. **Improve transparency in government contracts** and increase compliance with international procurement and trade standards
3. **Promote business integrity** and sustainable practices for private companies and state-owned enterprises
4. **Strengthen anti-corruption strategies**, policies and laws and improve redress mechanisms for companies, investors and the broader public.

Over the course of the project, FairBiz has demonstrated how sustained efforts to fight corruption can bring tangible benefits. For example, preventive anti-corruption measures were achieved in four countries: anti-corruption strategy adopted in Malaysia, corruption prevention indicators updated in Thailand, and anti-corruption law updated in Vietnam. During the project’s lifetime, over 4000 stakeholders in ASEAN were engaged in supporting the adoption of responsible business practices, including 300 companies and, indirectly, thousands of their employees. The absolute majority (96.83%) of FairBiz participants from the government, private and civil society sectors reported feeling more comfortable engaging in dialogues on integrity and transparency. And when it comes to tangible benefits to societies, Thailand’s government reported \$460 million in savings brought about by enhanced scrutiny and accountability in infrastructure procurement, supported by FairBiz and Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (COST).

Objectives of the event:

The closing event aims to achieve three objectives:

1. Demonstrate project’s achievements and lessons learned.
2. Ensure sustainability of project interventions beyond project duration
3. Showcase innovation that is taking place in different countries with potential for replication to other countries

The closing event is organized by UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub through its FairBiz project. The event will bring together governments and ASEAN representatives from the region along with private sector leaders and civil society representatives who contributed to the activities of FairBiz. The participants will

also include representatives from the UK government, UNDP Country Offices in FairBiz countries, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

Session Description

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 gender parity is not recovering and it is estimated that 160 years will be required to close the gap in the Asiatic Region¹.

Wealth and location inequalities persist in ASEAN, with Gini coefficients ranging from 0.44 to 0.31². Globally, there are over one billion persons with disabilities (15% of the world's population and about 100.000 in ASEAN and higher incidence in developing countries)³.

A case for inclusion has been illustrated for both women and people with disability showing that a nation forego up to 7 percent of their GDP due to the exclusion of persons with disability⁴ and that women economic participation could add up to 12 trillion to the global GDP⁵.

Societal progress and prosperity can occur only if we promote economic participation of these marginalized groups. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries have committed to leave no one behind and achieving the sustainable goals will be unattainable if we don't take concrete actions towards the inclusion and agency of women and marginalized groups.

Corruption, lack of transparency and protection, discrimination and bias affect vulnerable groups more significantly leading to deep inequalities that obstruct structural growth and economic development. On the other hand innovative models have demonstrated that this segment of population, when included, can drive change and progress in the economy and community.

Collective action and integrated approach have been at the foundation of the FairBiz Diversity & Inclusion Platform. The Project has implemented in the last four years targeted interventions to mainstream gender in the business integrity agenda by developing research and initiatives aimed at promoting women's agency and leadership in integrity. The project has explored the interconnectedness between gender, disability and integrity and developed an integrated approach to strengthen the capacity and promoting economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

Drawing from recent research and initiatives conducted by the FairBiz Project, this session will present key findings and recommendations for a more inclusive business environment. It will be followed by an insightful discussion on mainstreaming gender-sensitive approaches, and finally present the opportunity to put forward suggestions and guidance on the sustainability of the project.

Session Objectives

The key objectives of this session are to:

- Present FairBiz approaches, findings and impact that addressed the nexus between gender, disability and integrity in ASEAN to promote an inclusive economy.
- Exchange key lessons and best practices that helped promote greater leadership of women and marginalized groups thru integrated gender sensitive approaches.
- Draw from panelists discussion, as well as from the audience, the best way forward to sustain these initiatives.

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/>

² https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/ASEAN/ASEAN%20Gender%20Outlook_final.pdf

³ <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

⁴ <https://portulansinstitute.org/the-high-cost-of-exclusion-and-what-we-need-to-do-about-it/>

⁵ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>

Format

Moderator will welcome everyone and present the topic of the session, highlighting the intersections of gender diversity and broader inclusion goals with fair business practices.

Radhika Behuria, International Gender Expert and Chantelle McCabe, International Disability Expert will, in turn, briefly present the highlights of their recent research revolving on the correlations between gender, disability and a fair business environment.

Following the presentations, the moderator will introduce the panelists, and lead the discussion on relevant perspectives and practices in the region that can challenge or advance inclusion and responsible conduct.

The speakers will share their experiences about collaborating with FairBiz and the impact that resulted, as well as guidance and ideas on sustaining and scaling up the initiatives beyond FairBiz.

Panellists

Format: Presentation of FairBiz studies on gender and disability

- Ms. Chantelle McCabe, International Disability Expert
- Ms. Radhika Behuria, International Gender Expert

Panel Discussion:

- Ms. Susanne Friedrich, Director of Alliance for Integrity (AfIn)
- Dr. Soipetch Resanond, Secretary General (International Affairs), The Federation of Business and Professional Women's Association of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of H.M. the Queen
- Ms. Alisa Sivathorn, Disability Inclusion and Empowerment Specialist, UNDP Youth CoLab

Moderator: Moderator: Ms. Koh Miyaoi, Gender Advisor for Asia & the Pacific, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub

Speakers Profiles



Koh Miyaoi is a gender equality expert with over 25 years of professional experiences in multi-disciplinary sustainable development. Held positions with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UN DAW), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), UNDP Thailand Country Office, UNDP Regional Centre Colombo, UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, and UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility for Syria-related Crisis, to lead UNDP's gender equality programming, provide policy advisory, strategic vision-setting, analytical insights, programming, and management capacity building, working in collaboration with Civil Society Organisations, Academia, Governments, and the Private Sector partners. Currently the Asia-Pacific Gender Team Lead / Advisor for UNDP, based in Bangkok, Thailand.



Radhika Behuria

is a sociologist by training and has 20 years of cross-sectoral experience working with the United Nations, the private sector and think tanks. She has worked as a gender expert with UNDP in various capacities for over 12 years, followed by a transition to the private sector in 2015. Radhika has spent the last six years building and managing a strong consulting client base. Her consulting clients include UNDP, UN Women, Asian Development Bank, Nike Inc. and Access Health International, among others. She has led the development of several key research and knowledge pieces on gender equality issues, including in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion, and has extensive country experience in the Asia Pacific region.



Chantelle McCabe is an international human rights lawyer from Wellington, New Zealand. She has over 20 years of experience working on human rights, disability and gender issues with the UN system, governments, civil society, and organisations of persons with disabilities. After a period in private practice in New York working with refugees, she began working with UN agencies, especially in Asia Pacific. Chantelle has significant experience in a human rights based approach to disability inclusion, and the international human rights law standards contained in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Chantelle is the author of 60 UN publications, including "Legislation, Policy and Programmes concerning the Employment of People with Disabilities in Selected Countries of Asia and the Pacific". A Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand and a Member of the New York Bar, she holds a Master's in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law from the University of Paris, and a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Arts from Victoria University of Wellington. Chantelle is fluent in English, French and Spanish. She is mother to two children, one of whom is disabled.



Susanne Friedrich is the director of the "Alliance for Integrity", a global business-driven, multi-stakeholder initiative seeking to promote transparency and integrity in the economic system. Susanne is an organizational developer with large experience in capacity building and multi-stakeholder management. She started her professional career at the Chilean Export Promotion Bureau and worked as an advisor for public-private partnerships in development cooperation for several years. Before joining the Alliance for Integrity in June 2018 she worked in various projects of the German development cooperation in Latin America and Germany, in fields such as inclusive business and sustainable value chains and export promotion for SMEs. She also directed a regional project dedicated to capacity building for decentralization in the Andean region.



Dr. Soipetch Resanond is the Vice President of the Federation of Business and Professional Women of Thailand and the Director of Baechtold Limited. Over the past two decades, she has been dedicated to social work and welfare, serving as President, Area Director, Board Member, and more, in various civil societies across the spectrum from Women's Rights to Children Development. She is also an experienced Speaker Special and Lecturer on Business Administration and Marketing, Organization Behaviours and Business Strategies, etc., at numerous renowned universities. In recent years, she received the Award for Outstanding Thai Woman from the National Council of Women of Thailand and obtained the Advanced Diploma in National Defence Class from the National Defence College of Thailand.

Dr. Resanond achieved her Doctoral Degree in Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University, Florida, USA, and earned her MBA from Kasetsart University, Thailand.



Alisa Sivathorn has joined UNDP BRH as Disability Inclusion and Empowerment Specialist and will be providing support to the Youth team and will be focusing on disabilities inclusion and any related topics.

Prior to joining UNDP, Alisa (a visually impaired woman) was a co-founder of two startup companies which are trying to provide a solution for social issues e.g. water saving toilet and device that assists blind people to read print. She has experience in working with either local, national and international organizations as a researcher, project manager and trainer on various social issues e.g. rights of persons with disabilities, persons with diverse sogies and migrants etc.

Alisa completed a Doctoral degree in law from the University College of London (UCL).