

# VISION FOR A BETTER ASIA

*Ideas and Values that shape our future*



## Vision for a Better Asia

# Foreword

A month or so ago we asked some of the members of our ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum to share their Vision for a Better Asia in the hope that we could utilise this forum to provide the impetus for a better Asia by embracing, adapting and rallying behind their ideas.



We are delighted at the response received and offer our gratitude to those who have taken time from their busy schedules to share with us their Ideas and Values that we hope will be the catalyst to shape our future.

The themes of the contributions within this first edition of our e-Book are noticeably varied, but contain the common theme of optimism for a bright future for the peoples of Asia based on:

- reducing economic and social inequalities;
- undertaking environmentally sustainable development;
- taking a pivotal role on the world stage;
- developing an Asia community and focus; and
- developing culture and institutions that facilitate a focus on not only our basic needs.

We hope you enjoy these Visions for a Better Asia as much as we have. We are looking forward to expanding on these at our ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum in Kuala Lumpur on 29th/30th September.

We welcome your contributions and look forward to sharing some of these in the next instalment of our e-Book. My own contribution would be that **equality of opportunity must form the basis of our quest for a Better Asia ...**

With best regards,

**Stuart V Kemp** | Executive Director

Asia Inc Forum

[www.asiaincforum.com](http://www.asiaincforum.com)

# Contributors

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# Greatness

Happens when they put on one of these...  
Some call it opportunity, others spell privilege.  
You?





## Asia @ the speed of light

Asia is changing the world. And S.E. Asia is moving from the fringes towards the epicenter of this phenomenon. The region has displayed resilience in the face of the world's worst financial crisis, and it has proven that its growth momentum is sustainable.

Economists forecast Asia to grow three times faster than the developed world in the short term. Manufacturing and trade activity have rebounded to pre-crisis levels buoyed by increasing intra-regional demand. Three Asian countries lead the E7, which will give the G7 a run for economic dominance.

An increasingly prosperous Asia needs to achieve an even and widespread distribution of economic benefits: ensuring more jobs, strengthening basic services, i.e. healthcare and education; and spawning entrepreneurship and small businesses. A better Asia should also mean a greener Asia. The responsible and sustainable use of our finite natural resources is critical for Asia's continuous success.

Asia's underlying strength lies in our ability to connect with each other through shared values and beliefs; while celebrating diversity and uniqueness. Our next generation is marked by multi-cultural and multi-national savvy, yet grounded in shared history and culture.

**A relevant Asia means pulling together towards common goals and building on each other's strengths to become the transformational force for a better world.**

**Basil Ong** | International Chairman,  
World Presidents' Organization  
[www.wpo.org](http://www.wpo.org)



# Cultivating the next generation of Asianists

## Asia Needs Dedicated Asianists

After 15 years of teaching, I have finally come in contact with young Asian scholars who have an interest in countries neighboring their own; and who perhaps will become the next generation of true Asianists.

As a region Asia has developed in tandem and parallel to each other but seldom in contact with each other. **It is ironic that Asians learn about each other via CNN and BBC**; and doubly ironic that Asian citizens often do not know anything about the language, culture and history of countries that share land and maritime borders with them.

Looking at Asia as a whole and how sub-regional groupings like ASEAN have evolved over the years, we see that one problem to greater and deeper intra-Asian development is the lack of Asian-minded Asian technocrats, scholars and policy-makers. Yet in this age of portable communications technology, there is no excuse for us not to learn about each other better. Looking closely at our neighbors is the best way to remind ourselves of our common fate and destiny; for like it or not Asia and Asians are in one boat and we will either swim or sink together.

As Asia gets itself out of the recent global economic crisis, it is imperative that the states in the region spend more time and investment towards nurturing a new generation of Asian-minded Asianists like the students who have come under my care. There is no Asia without Asians, and for that a concerted drive to create a new generation of Asianists is imperative for us today, and into the future.

**Dr. Farish A Noor** | Senior Research Fellow

Nanyang Technological University

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## Transformed Society

Standing at the rise of the second decade of this still 'new' millennium, tomorrow's Asia looms even more magnificently than the great leap forward it is from the Asia of yesterday.

Yet the progress happening every day and everywhere unfortunately isn't happening to everyone. Growth concentrates where economies focus, opportunities abound, and populations migrate. City slums become slum cities. In their wake, abandoned for distant workplaces, are ancestral homelands now shadows of a glorious past. The marginalised are getting left further behind by the day resulting in a widening of extremes as never before.

**True leaders cannot accept 'FutureAsia' to be other than a time and place where everyone lives the benefits of a transformed society.** But it is unfair to expect such transformation to rest solely with Governments already struggling to prime economies and deliver their full potential. Business has to step up and provide the benevolent leadership that enables empowerment and seeds of change. Bringing people together to help others help themselves and others. Interdependence leading to independence so no one is left behind. An age-old concept with a new age name: crowdsourcing. Micro-contributions from individuals leading to mega-change for communities. Sustainable change where big goals are attained one small step at a time. This is the future of change. And this is a good focus for the future.

**Jason Tai** | Executive Director,  
PanSar Berhad Group  
[www.pansar.com.my](http://www.pansar.com.my)

# Can ASEAN Compete



ASEAN100  
LEADERSHIP FORUM 2010

29 - 30 September 2010 in Kuala Lumpur



## Mutual Assistance among Asians

**It is estimated that 70% of Asia's massive savings have been invested outside the region,** and through global financial centers, they are recycled back to finance Asia's huge investment requirements.

Not only that Asia has to incur enormous amount of intermediation costs, it is also vulnerable to sudden change in the sentiment of global investors. To sustain their progress, Asian economies face the daunting task of deepening and broadening their financial markets. Strengthened regulatory framework and improved availability of safe and liquid portfolio assets will encourage Asia's vast savings to circulate more efficiently into the region's own investment opportunity. Asia also needs to mitigate its vulnerability to sudden reversal of capital flows by way of further promoting regional financial cooperation which includes strengthening the framework of mutual assistance among Asian economies to safeguard against short term liquidity problems and other risks of future financial shocks.

**John Prasetio** | Chairman  
CBA Consulting  
[www.cbaconsulting.co.id](http://www.cbaconsulting.co.id)



# Must Know Must Do Must Teach

**Human capital, long term vision and good knowledge in the respective businesses will continue to be key attributes for successful ventures.** We must also understand the wants and the needs of customers by providing solutions to their needs.

Product innovations at the most competitive costing will become key determinants between sustaining a healthy market share and eventually reaping handsome profits. Selecting a pool of highly enthusiastic team of people who are loyal, hard working, honest, pro-active, and can continuously add value to the day-to-day operations of any organization will ultimately create an impetus platform for a lean and highly productive successful organization for a long time. Fresh and young intakes will also generate new and fresh ideas enhancing the R&D processes and accentuate specialization for product excellence. Three simple steps from my personal simple philosophy: knowing the market **(Must Know)**, acting upon what is known **(Must Do)** and sharing the success of your achievement **(Must Teach)** can be very effective in propelling businesses to heights that they have never been before.

**Tan Sri Dato Sri Lim Wee-Chai** | Chairman

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## The Best Place to Live

Asian governments are always looking to develop their economies in a quest to raise the standards of living of their citizens. This push towards a higher per capita income should not come at a price to future generations.

**Responsible development requires a sensitive balanced approach.** Politicians should not just pay lip service to environmental protection but should enact and strengthen laws that will contribute towards reducing the nation's emissions, maintaining bio-diversity and setting aside funds to remediate and rehabilitate past environmental mistakes.

As a community of nations, Asia should find ways to help each other to keep our planet from suffering from the effects of our never – ending struggle for survival and to better our lives. We should pool our knowledge, resource and talent to choose a more sustainable, more human path towards improving our lives. Each country must therefore offer assistance to green positive projects domestically and look at ways to help those of their neighbours. This is a pressing issue. Waiting for consensus will not do. Our collective vision should be to become a better, more prosperous Asia that is also the best place on Earth to live and to raise our children.

**Mirzan Mahathir** | Chairman / CEO  
Crescent Capital Sdn Bhd



You did not come here just to be engrossed by a good speech...

ASEAN100  
LEADERSHIP FORUM 2010

Debate of the Heavyweights

29 - 30 September 2010 in Kuala Lumpur



# Strategy for an Asian Community

Asia is the world's largest continent covering an area of 44 million square kilometers with a population of over 3800 million. With its huge and abundant resources both natural and human, Asia with its vibrant potentiality is poised to face up with the challenge of the 21st century.

Despite its cultural diversity, heterogeneous ethnic groups and notwithstanding its uneven levels of development, Asia has been imposed by the common historical context with its colonial and imperialist imprint. With the end of Cold War, Asian countries have to adjust in line with the Post Cold War's reality.

In the face of rising competition in the age of globalization, with USA at the apex of power and a more unified Europe under the aegis of the European Union, Asian countries have to react to prevent the “zero sum game” paradigm with increasing widening and deepening relationship, through the so called horizontal and vertical integration. The set up of AFTA, ASEAN Community, ASEAN plus three and six (including China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India), leading to the “East Asian Free Trade Area, are all testament of a dynamic and vibrant Asia, having chosen its appropriate roadmap. The vision for better Asia should thus be embedded and further advanced in the strategic direction towards the “Asian Community” covering the cultural, economic and political dimensions. In so doing, the approach should be inclusive and extensive, drawing the participation of people from all walks of life: academia, SME and grass-root. **Better Asia should be based upon the principle of peace, prosperity and good governance.**

**Prinya Taithongchai** | Group CEO  
Starprint Public Co Ltd

Vision for a Better Asia

# Between Art & Consideration

The 21st century is destined to be THE economic blossoming century for Asia! With it comes prosperity and the possibility for a better quality of life for all. But will it, really? I certainly hope so. And therefore, hypothesize two view points for a sustainable quality future:



## **The appreciation of Art**

Great art creation and appreciation flourishes in periods of sustained economic wealth, peace and tranquility. If peace and economic development prevails, we shall see the **Renaissance of Asian Contemporary Art and probably witness the world's highest price work from Asia this century!** A room filled with art is a room filled with thoughts. Art is a reflection where basic needs are met; therefore (when that happens) the next focus will be on developing our inner-man. Once developed, greed will no longer be in fashion, character will!

## **The consideration for our fellow men (and women)**

All the economic wealth amassed will mean nothing if it does not enrich the soul and help us develop an intrinsic care for our fellow human being.

Consider this: if we are able to extend care to our neighbours;

Will there be a need for us to fight for anything with them?

Will we need to develop weapons of mass destruction?

Will countries need to set aside a percentage of their GDP for defense?

This utopia can only happen if the region does not become bi-polar, where the rich becomes richer and the poor become poorer. The very act of sharing will ensure peace and sustainable well-being for all.

**Richard Hoon** | CEO

I Search Worldwide Group

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## From Potential to Reality

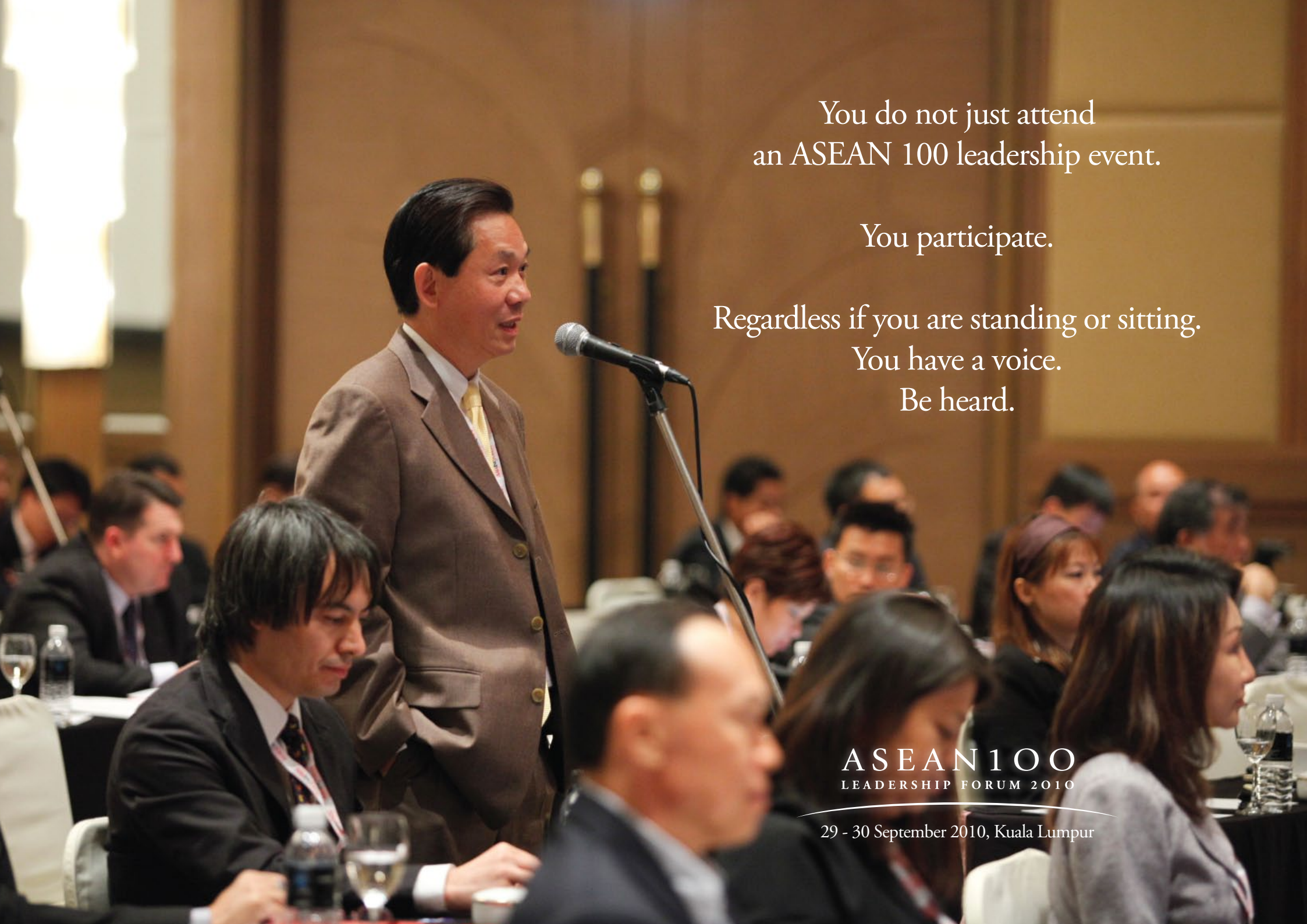
The sheer scale of Asia's potential is inspiring

Translating this potential to a reality is a separate matter by (looking at Europe, one can see economies and societies that have benefited and suffered greatly depending on the quality and integrity of leadership, infrastructure, and a true desire for sustainable development.)

**Asia's success cannot be taken for granted, though the odds are very much in Asia's favour.** A real catalyst will be the inevitable change of Asia being known as an 'export driven' zone to one balanced with growing local consumption and inter-regional trade. The development of regional and local companies, combined with the growth of domestic consumption will provide a new perspective on growth opportunities. There will be tension between the passion to move quickly, and the ability of civil institutions and infrastructure to support the growth and changes. This is a healthy tension, though one to be aware of.

Time has shown over and over again that centers of power are never static. It is this fact that sets the scene for Asia's growing strength in the decades to come.

**Tareq Muhmood** | CEO  
HSBC Brunei  
[www.hsbc.com.bn](http://www.hsbc.com.bn)

A man in a brown suit and yellow tie stands at a podium with a microphone, addressing an audience seated at round tables. The setting is a formal conference room with wood-paneled walls and other attendees in the background.

You do not just attend  
an ASEAN 100 leadership event.

You participate.

Regardless if you are standing or sitting.  
You have a voice.  
Be heard.

ASEAN100  
LEADERSHIP FORUM 2010

29 - 30 September 2010, Kuala Lumpur



# Asia's Unfinished Business

There is much to celebrate about Asia's economic dynamism.

If we look at global income per capita growth in the last two decades the 10 fastest growing economies in the world are all from Asia.

If we take a historical perspective, we see that it took Britain 58 years to double its income from 1780; the United States 47 years from 1839; Japan 35 years from 1885; Korea 11 years from 1966 and China 10 years from 1978.

However, much of Asia remains very poor with huge and often growing disparities between and within countries.

Asia's wealthiest country Japan is 21 times richer than the East Asian average and over 200 times that of the poorest country in Asia. Within the industrial powerhouses of China and India and the high performing economies of ASEAN, income disparities remain very large.

**Asia's challenge today is to ensure that its remarkable economic growth is increasingly inclusive and broadly shared.**

So let us celebrate Asia's achievements but let us also remind ourselves that there is still unfinished business.

**Dato Timothy Ong** | Chairman,  
Asia Inc Forum / Brunei Economic Development Board  
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## End to Inequality!

A better Asia requires an inclusive society where equal opportunity and access to health and wealth for all should be the norm. A complimentary role between male and female must be established in such a way that they result in a united economic force when their optimum potential is reached. **Yet in many Asian countries, unequal treatment of the female gender remains. This has to end.** We have to challenge cultural standards and the political will of governments.

Advocacy for the empowerment of young women is much needed, since role models and strong leadership are scarce. This is worsened by the mentality of the middle to lower classes in general who perceive themselves as "fated" to remain as they are. This mentality poses a status quo which must be challenged and altered. Only then can a real change begin to take place.

Change begins with education, especially for young girls. Better-educated girls lead to better homes, which pave ways to better communities and eventually, a better society. Education is the force that drives both economy and society.

Leadership and strong role models are important in leading this endeavor.

In Indonesia, one of the activities of the YCAB Foundation is to sponsor school dropouts. We help them continue their primary education while offering opportunities to sustain the investment we made in their education.

Every young girl included in this initiative can be the key catalyst for real change to begin."

**Veronica Colondam** | Founder & CEO

YCAB Foundation

[www.veronicacolondam.com](http://www.veronicacolondam.com)



# Prosperity & Well Being

Any vision for "A Better Asia" must have as its ultimate goal; the prosperity and well-being of the Asian people in mind.

There are three main components in guaranteeing that such a vision can be transformed from a hopeful dream into an attainable reality:

Firstly, **Asia must focus on ensuring that sustainable economic growth becomes an operating norm by the year 2050.** This can only be achieved by rapidly securing and effectively harnessing its massive supplies of energy, food and water. If these resources are carefully managed in an efficient and economical manner, they can go a long way towards eliminating the widespread poverty and disease that still ravages large parts of the Asian continent. Closely linked to economic growth is the nurturing of a culture of freedom of thought through placing a premium on education and maximizing the potential of Asia's sleeping youths. A liberated intellectual culture where creativity is actively encouraged will stimulate entrepreneurial innovation, and thereby help succeed in transforming Asia into a global forerunner in both the economic and cultural spheres. Finally, for the first two component parts of economic growth and education to be successful, strong and fair leadership both within and between countries must come to the fore. The two economic powerhouses of China and India can set a pertinent example by prioritizing the aforementioned beneficial aims above and beyond the draining military expenditure devoted to regional conflicts. An energy-starved Asia should have more nuclear power plants than nuclear bombs. Similarly, every Asian country would do well to recognize the crucial part to be played by the supremacy of the rule of law and absence of corruption in finally changing their roles from that of irresponsible imitators to model leaders. If we can get these elements working alongside each other - and there is no reason to suggest we cannot - Asia will be in a position to assume its long-touted place at the forefront of world leadership for future generations. In this respect, the 21st century can truly become the "Asian century."

**Zafar Malik** | CEO  
FM Consulting



# Quest for a Sustainable Tomorrow

How can prosperity be sustained in ASEAN?

My postulation is: **the more business friendly a nation is, the more prosperous it will become.**

History has shown strong correlation between the above variables; from Mesopotamia to the Roman Empire, business-friendliness was evident, prosperity found and poverty contained.

But how do we measure business friendliness?

An indicator is the Doing Business List, researched by World Bank Group. The elements of business-friendliness used as key indicators are highlighted below:

- Starting a business
- Getting credit
- Registering property
- Paying taxes
- Trading across borders
- Enforcing contracts
- Dealing with construction permits
- Closing a business
- Protection of investors
- Employing workers

Generally, ASEAN countries recorded a commendable performance in 2010 under this research but more must be done. Yet, more must be done to increase business-friendliness and realize prosperity in ASEAN.

In moving forward, these nations must ensure that the elements of a business friendly nation are not just a means but an end in itself. Preservation of these elements will provide a sound foundation for private business entities to thrive and in this effort, ASEAN nations will find natural drivers of prosperity taking its due course.

**Tengku Zafrul Aziz** | Group Director  
K&N Kenanga Holdings Berhad  
[www.kenanga.com.my](http://www.kenanga.com.my)



There is a serious side to ASEAN 100 Leadership Forum...

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Seeing is believing

29 - 30 September 2010, Kuala Lumpur

Meet the contributors



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29 - 30 September in Kuala Lumpur

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