The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly cast a long shadow globally with unprecedented socioeconomic disruptions most acutely felt by vulnerable sectors across societies. In the Asia-Pacific region, the 2021 Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (Survey 2021) indicated that slow regional progress in implementing the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has exacerbated the vulnerability to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. While governments have developed a broad range of policy responses, there are opportunities to use these policies to not only mitigate immediate adverse impacts from the pandemic but also to strengthen pandemic preparedness and resilience in the future.

To this end, the Survey 2021 emphasized that, in going forward, countries should prioritize a better alignment of the COVID-19 recovery packages with the 2030 Agenda. The proposed “building forward better” policy package has several dimensions, covering social services, digital access, and green development. The Survey 2021 also reinforced a key message that while available policy options are vast and diverse, countries in the Asia-Pacific need to focus on the options that leverage their strengths and are implementable given their institutional capacity.

It in this context, a South-East Asia Policy Dialogue is being organised. Countries in the subregion have taken steps to build more resilient and sustainable economies going into the post-pandemic recovery phase, with differentiated strategies in line with their national priorities. There is also strong commitment to pursue multilateral cooperation recognizing that transboundary issues remain.

The policy dialogue aims to inform stakeholders on the policy packages of South-East Asian economies to build more resilient and sustainable economies. In particular, acknowledging the differentiated strategies across countries, country experiences will highlight the different dimensions of the “building forward better” package. Potentials for regional cooperation and collaboration will be given focus.
South-East Asia Policy Dialogue
Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021
Towards post-COVID-19 resilient economies
5 May 2021, 14:00-15:30 Bangkok time

PROGRAMME

14:00 - 14:10  Opening Remarks
Ruhimat Soerakoesoemah
Head, ESCAP Sub-regional Office for South-East Asia

14:10 – 14:30  Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021:
Highlights for South-East Asia
Shuvojit Banerjee
Economic Affairs Officer
Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division, ESCAP

14:30 - 15:00  “Building forward better” Policy Package: Country Perspectives
• UN Indonesia
  Diandra Pratami
  Development Coordination Officer, SDGs / Economist

• Mekong Region
  Suriyan Vichitlekarn
  Executive Director, the Mekong Institute

• South-East Asia
  Kensuke Tanaka
  Head of Asia Desk, OECD, DEV

15:00 - 15:20  Q&A
Moderator: So Jeong Lee
Junior Programme Officer, ESCAP

15:20 - 15:30  Conclusion
Ruhimat Soerakoesoemah
Head, ESCAP Sub-regional Office for South-East Asia
Profile of Speakers

**Diandra Pratami** is a Development Coordination Officer, Economist at the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Indonesia. She provides substantive inputs to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 in Indonesia. Previously, she worked at the World Food Programme (WFP) Indonesia Country Office where she led the government and private sector partnerships. She began her professional career in public policy at the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) and UNDP. Her interests include development policy and economics, SDGs, and development cooperation. She holds a Master of Public Policy, specializing in development policy, from the Australian National University and a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning from Bandung Institute of Technology.

**Suriyan Vichitlekarn** is Executive Director at the Mekong Institute. He holds over 15 years of experience in delivering innovative approaches and sustainable practices across his specialized areas of agriculture and rural development, public-private partnership, and trade facilitation in the GMS and Southeast Asia. Prior to MI, Mr. Suriyan was the Deputy Cluster Coordinator for Food and Agriculture of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in Thailand and Spokesperson of the Agriculture Working Group under the GIZ Sector Network for Natural Resources and Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, Mr. Suriyan carries an extensive international development network, having assumed key positions at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat in Indonesia, and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center.

**Kensuke Tanaka** is the Head of the Asia Desk at the OECD Development Centre. He initiated and is in charge of several publications including the biannual flagship publication “OECD Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India”. He also started the periodical “This Quarter in Asia” (2010-13), releasing the Asian Business Cycle Indicators and the “OECD Revenue statistics for Asian countries” (2012-19). He published two books on infrastructure and is finalizing another one on macroprudential policies in Emerging Asia. Previously, he was a Programme manager on Southeast Asia, at OECD, CCNM and taught at Sciences Po, France and held lectures at various universities in Japan and Emerging Asia. He published articles in the fields of development/international finance and macroeconomic/public policy in Asia.