

**ASEAN Secretariat Press Release
Launched: ASEAN Secretariat Policy Forum
ASEAN Secretariat, 14 July 2009**



The ASEAN Secretariat Policy Forum – a platform for a larger reach of people to be involved in the activities of the Secretariat – was formally launched at the ASEAN Secretariat today. To be held regularly, the Forum is envisaged to draw prominent speakers to share ideas and insights with the public on issues relevant to the work of the Secretariat. The Forum takes the place of the previous ASEC Brown Bag Series.

In launching the Forum, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, said that the ASEAN Secretariat was aware that policy matters were the purview and the space for the political leadership – the ASEAN Leaders and the Ministers. He stressed, however, that it remained incumbent upon the Secretariat to look at the horizon to see what the issues that could be policy issues of ASEAN were, so when it reaches the level of the Leaders and the Ministers, the Secretariat would be prepared for their deliberation and bring the decision down to the implementation level.

“We just want to be prepared to be their good instrument of policy implementation,” he highlighted.

The first speaker of the Forum was Prof. Amitav Acharya, Professor of International Affairs at the School of International Service at the American University in Washington D.C., who spoke on “Reconstructing ASEAN: Challenges for the 21st Century”. His address tracked how ASEAN had witnessed momentous changes to its membership, institutional structure and role from the early years until today with the development of an ASEAN Community and the adoption of the ASEAN Charter.

He stressed that there was a need to ensure that the initiatives of the past were fully implemented and the provisions complied with. He said that the region’s future credibility depends on how it carried out the goals and priorities it had set out for itself.



L-R: Dr Rizal Sukma, Prof. Amitav Acharya, Prof. Dato' Dr Zakaria Ahmad & Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar

His lecture was followed by a panel session comprising Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Research Professor and Deputy Chair for Social Sciences and Humanities at The Indonesian Institute of Sciences, and the Director for Programme and Research at The Habibie Centre in Jakarta; Prof. Dato' Dr Zakaria Ahmad, Distinguished Fellow of the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College; and Dr Rizal Sukma, the Executive Director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta. A Q&A session followed the panel session.



The Forum concluded with the launching of Prof. Acharya's latest book, "*Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 2nd ed. The book, in offering a comprehensive evaluation of the reconstructed ASEAN, reviews a decade of new developments and argues that ASEAN remains indispensable to the security of Southeast Asia, and will continue to play a major role in the wider Asia-Pacific security.

Prof. Acharya is also the Chair of the ASEAN Studies Center at the American University. The Center was formally established on 1 July 2009. It is the first ASEAN Studies Center in the United States. The Center is part of American University's School of International Service, the largest and one of the oldest schools of international relations in the US.