

**Connecting Civil Societies III:
An Asia-Europe Dialogue on Economy and Society
17th-18th October 2008 | Beijing, China**

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Venue: Beijing International Hotel
International Conference Center

Thursday, 16th October 2008
Arrival of Participants, Registration and Welcome Reception
<p>Welcome Remarks by Amb. Lu Yongshou Asia-Europe Foundation Board Governor for China</p>
Day 1 – Friday, 17th October 2008
Opening Session
Welcome Remarks
<p>Chair: Mr. Peter Ryan Director-Intellectual Exchange, Asia-Europe Foundation</p> <p>Prof. Pan Jiahua Executive Director, Research Centre for Sustainable Development Chinese Academy of Social Sciences</p> <p>Dr. Luk Van Langenhove Director, United Nations University-Centre for Regional Integration Studies</p> <p>Prof. Michael Murphy President, University College Cork</p>
Keynote Speeches
<p>Ambassador Wang Xue Xian ASEM Senior Official Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China</p> <p>H.E. Hervé Ladsous Ambassador of France to China</p> <p>Dr. Walden Bello Senior Analyst, Focus on the Global South</p>

Panel: What can ASEM deliver in response to the current crises in the world economy?

The purpose of this session was to explain what the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is as well as how governments and civil society can amplify its potential for broad co-operation between Asia and Europe—with respect to the current crises in particular. This offered the participants a good understanding of its processes, structures, and its strengths and weaknesses.

The session examined the mechanisms of ASEM through the shared experiences and expertise of a panel brought together from a wide arena of sectors including the AEBF, AEPF, academe, and NGOs, who have been exposed to the inner workings of ASEM. Each panelist also shared views on ASEM in general, before the Chair moderates panel discussion and takes comments/questions from the floor.

Chair:

Dr. Kaarina Suonio, Board Governor for Finland,
Asia-Europe Foundation

Panel Discussion:

Mr. Charles Santiago
Asia Co-ordinator, Asia-Europe Peoples Forum

Dr. Tom Hardiman
Core Group Member, Asia-Europe Business Forum

Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee
Senior Research Fellow, Singapore Institute for International Affairs

Roundtable Discussions

Participants entered into roundtable discussion to discuss the main issues relating to economic and social stability between our two regions. The underlying question of debate: *Does regional integration help or hinder the two regions in this current period of economic instability?*

Roundtable 1 - Food and environmental security. Sharp rises in food prices, which peaked earlier this year (The Economist's food price index showed a 55% jump since 2000), and constraints on food supply have uncovered the vulnerability of global agriculture and access to food. Some preliminary analysis indicates that the impact of biofuels utilisation for climate change mitigation on food security may be negative. Moreover, studies show that the net impact of food price inflation has been negative for the world's poorest populations. After the UN & the international community's immediate responses to the food crisis, what necessary policy adjustments are needed? How can we secure our common future?

Moderator:

Mr. Philip Bowring, Journalist, International Herald Tribune

Speaker:

Dr. Somrudee Nicro, Director, Urbanization and Environment Program,
Thailand Environment Institute

Prof. Li Chenggui, Executive Director, Agricultural Development Institute
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Roundtable 2 - Energy and Oil. Oil prices have been increasing at an alarming rate and the growing instability of the market hark back to the oil crises of the 70s and 80s, evoking fear of subsequent financial insecurity. Within this year until July, oil prices almost doubled—they have quadrupled over the last five years. Surging fuel prices and transportation throughout the food supply chain contributed to food price inflation earlier this year. There seems to be some respite with the recent fall of commodity prices, oil in particular. However energy security remains a priority issue for governments and their people. What are the global issues and challenges vis-à-vis Europe and Asia's common interest? How does climate change mitigation relate to energy security? How does energy security relate to economic security? How can Asia and Europe go forward together, particularly since alternative energy solutions to oil are required to sustain the needs of developing societies?

Moderator:

Mr. Christer Holtsberg

Director of the Swedish Environmental Secretariat for Asia

Speaker:

Dr. Zhao Xingshu, Researcher

Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Roundtable 3 - Financial Market Turbulence.

The United States is in the middle of the most serious financial market crisis of the last 75 years with significant spillovers to Europe, Asia and growing implications for the rest of the world. Financial market crisis happen frequently. But why is the current crisis so deep, long-lasting and wide-spread? What macro-economic and structural developments and trends had a significant impact on the functioning and the structure of financial markets? Factors would include generous liquidity creation, a long period of low interest rates, large current account imbalances, the (temporary) dis-inflation impact of globalisation, the growing importance of the originate-and-distribute model and the development of highly complex instruments, the evolving role of credit rating agencies, distorted compensation incentives for bank managers, the lack of a comprehensive macro-prudential approach in financial market supervision, and the pro-cyclicality of certain valuation requirements. How can responses to the crisis so far—from public authorities (central banks, governments, supervisors, European Commission) and the industry itself—be evaluated?

Moderator:

Dr. Raymond Atje, Head of the Economics Department,
Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Speaker:

Dr. Klaus Regling,

Director-General, European Commission – Economic and Financial Affairs

Day 2 – Saturday, 18th October 2008

Thematic Workshops

Participants were split into three workshops of about 15 people each. Each group discussed one of the three thematic issues from the previous day. Participants were asked to formulate policy recommendations, particularly for ASEM.

Workshop 1: Financial Market Turbulence

Moderator:

Dr. Joern-Carsten Gottwald,

Irish Institute of Chinese Studies, University College Cork

Rapporteur:
Dr. Raymond Atje, Head of the Economics Department,
Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Workshop 2: Food and environmental security

Moderator:
Mr. Augustine Anthuvan, News Editor, Channel News Asia

Rapporteur:
Mr. Richard Werly, Brussels Bureau Chief for Le Temps

Workshop 3: Energy and Oil

Moderator:
Mr. Christer Holtsberg
Director of the Swedish Environmental Secretariat for Asia

Rapporteur:
Dr. Jan Pronk, President of the Society for International Development & former Special Representative of the
UN Secretary-General to Sudan

Sectoral Workshops

The second workshop involved the breaking up of the participants into sectors represented (e.g. governments/multilaterals, NGOs, media, academics/researchers, business) in the attempt to achieve more focused and specific recommendations, even possibilities for co-operation among the institutions and networks that they represent.

Group1: Governments/Multilaterals

Moderator:
Dr. Xinning Song
Senior Research Fellow, Comparative Regional Integration Studies, United Nations University

Rapporteur: Richard Werly

Group2: NGOs

Moderator:
Mr. Andy Rutherford
Member, International Organising Committee, Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum and Head of International Partnerships, One World Action

Rapporteur:
Ou Virak, Director, Cambodian Center for Human Rights

Group3: Business & Media

Moderator:
Dr. Jacques Gravereau
Core Group Member, Asia-Europe Business Forum and
President, HEC Institute

Rapporteur:
Dr. Raymond Atje, Head of the Economics Department,
Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Developing a Social Agenda for ASEM

Venue: Annex International Conference Center
Function Room 5

Report of Key Messages & Recommendations

Main Rapporteur/Session Chair:

Dr. Jan Pronk

President of the Society for International Development & former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Sudan

Rapporteurs:

Ou Virak, Director, Cambodian Center for Human Rights

Mr. Richard Werly, Brussels Bureau Chief for Le Temps

Dr. Raymond Atje, Head of the Economics Department,
Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Closing remarks from organisers

Representative, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Research

Dr. Luk Van Langenhove

Director, Comparative Regional Integration Studies Programme of the United Nations University (UNU-CRIS)

Dr. Joern-Carsten Gottwald,
Irish Institute of Chinese Studies, University College Cork

Amb. Wonil Cho

Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation