



THE ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION AND MARUAH SINGAPORE ARE PLEASED TO JOINTLY PRESENT A LECTURE ON:

**"An ASEAN Human Rights body:  
A Milestone in the 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?"**

**PROGRAMME**

- 15h30-16h00 : Registration
- 16h00-16h10 : **WELCOME REMARKS**  
Amb. Wonil Cho  
Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation
- 16h10-16h30 : **KEYNOTE LECTURE**  
Vitit Muntarbhorn  
Co-Chair, Civil Society Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism
- 16h30-16h50 : **DISCUSSANTS' REMARKS**  
Michael Vatikiotis,  
Asia Regional Director, HD Centre  
  
Cynthia Gabriel  
Vice President, International Human Rights Federation and former Executive  
Director, Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)  
  
Maureen Malone  
Director and the Lam Chair of Law and Public Policy, Institute for Dispute  
Resolution
- 16h50-17h30 : **OPEN DISCUSSION**  
  
MODERATOR:  
Braema Mathi  
Coordination, Maruah Singapore Representative
- 17h30-onwards : **RECEPTION**
- Venue : ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION  
31 HENG MUI KENG TERRACE

## **"An ASEAN Human Rights body: A Milestone in the 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?"**

**Speaker** : **Prof. Dr. Vitit Muntarbhorn**

**Co-Chair of the Civil Society Working Group  
for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism**

### **Abstract**

This year is the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a key UN declaration regarded as the bedrock for setting human rights standards worldwide. The year also coincides auspiciously with the possible establishment of an ASEAN Human Rights "body", a mechanism referred to in Article 14 in the recently adopted ASEAN Charter and currently in the process of ratification. How will that body be established substantively and to what extent will it respond to the aspirations of the Universal Declaration? Will it bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality? Furthermore, what impact will the establishment of an ASEAN Human Rights body have on Asia-Europe dialogue? These are some of the issues the speaker will address during his presentation.

This lecture takes place on the sidelines of the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism meeting, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2008 in Singapore.

### **Speaker's Profile**

#### **Vitit Muntarbhorn**



Vitit Muntarbhorn is a Professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. He is currently UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the DPR Korea. He is also Co-Chair of the Civil Society Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism.

Professor Muntarbhorn is an eminent expert in human rights with more than 1000 publications and combines the qualities of a scholar, an educator, a policy-making adviser and a grass-root human rights activist. He has served in various capacities for the United Nations system. In 1990-1994, he was Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. He was awarded the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education in 2004.

### **Discussants' Profiles**

#### **Michael Vatikiotis**

Michael Vatikiotis is the Asia Regional Director for the Geneva-based Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Based in Singapore, he works on promoting dialogue and conflict resolution in Asia. He is also a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Formerly editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Vatikiotis has been a writer and journalist in Asia for 20 years. He has lived in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand as well as Hong Kong.

He has written two books on regional politics; “Indonesian Politics Under Suharto” and “Political Change in Southeast Asia”. His published fiction includes “The Spice Garden” a novel on religious conflict in Eastern Indonesia published in 2004 and two collections of short stories on Southeast Asia. He is a regular contributor to opinion pages of a number of regional newspapers.

Vatikiotis is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, earned his doctorate from Oxford University and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Maryland. He is a member of the Asia Society’s International Council. He speaks the Thai and Indonesian languages fluently.

## **Cynthia Gabriel**

Cynthia Gabriel has been involved in human rights work for more than a decade now.

She had served first as a staff member of Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), the leading human rights organization in Malaysia, then as the Executive Director from 2001-2004, and currently sits on its Board of Directors.

Cynthia was elected as the Vice President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), a leading global organization working for human rights worldwide. In her capacity as Executive Director of SUARAM, she ensured that the difficult human rights issues such as detention without trial torture and freedom of expression and access to information was put onto the table of governments and that the plight of refugees and asylum seekers developed to become an important part of the organization’s work.

Since 2006, Cynthia was appointed as the Regional Coordinator of CARAM Asia, and now leads a regional network of NGOs across the Asian continuum, working on the rights of migrants, through participatory research, advocacy and capacity building. CARAM Asia has worked to ensure the empowerment of migrants, their families and communities for greater promotion and protection of human rights, including health, gender, reproductive and sexual rights.

## **Maureen Maloney**

Maureen Maloney is an Irish national. She joined the Institute for Dispute Resolution in January 2000 and is currently the Director and the Lam Chair of Law and Public Policy. She returned to the University of Victoria, and her position in the Faculty of Law, following a term as Deputy Minister (1993 to 2000) and Deputy Attorney General of the Province of British Columbia (1997 to 2000).

Before assuming her appointment with the Ministry in 1993, Prof. Maloney was Dean of Law. She has published and lectured extensively in various areas including women and the law, and aspects of the law on disadvantaged groups.

Her current teaching and research interests are in the areas of dispute resolution and international human rights, dispute resolution, and the administration of justice and restorative justice. On an international level, she has been involved in justice and human rights projects in South Africa, China and Guatemala.

## ABOUT THE ASIA-EUROPE FOUNDATION

The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** advances mutual understanding and collaboration between the people of Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges. These exchanges include conferences, lecture tours, workshops, seminars and the use of web-based platforms. The major achievement of ASEF is the establishment of permanent bi-regional networks focussed on areas and issues that help to strengthen Asia-Europe relations.

Established in February 1997 by the partners of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)<sup>1</sup>, ASEF reports to a board of governors representing the ASEM partners. ASEF is the only permanent physical institution of the ASEM process. Since 1997, the Foundation has initiated projects engaging 14,000 individuals from Asia and Europe. ASEF works in partnership with other public institutions and civil society actors to ensure its work is broad-based and balanced among the partner countries.

This particular lecture is organised under ASEF's governance pillar. ASEF reinforces the role of civil society in good governance with Asia-Europe exchanges that benefit the peoples of both regions.

Our programmes:

- Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights - engenders groundbreaking government-civil society dialogue on various dimensions of human rights.
- Democratisation and Justice Series - platform to explore differences, similarities and challenges of democratisation processes, particularly in countries undergoing political transition in Asia and Europe.

For further information, please visit <http://www.asef.org>

## ABOUT MARUAH SINGAPORE

Maruah Singapore is a group of individuals who have made a commitment to the process of facilitating for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism. We believe that such a process will be good for the region and for Singapore. We come from all backgrounds — professionals, students, homemakers, academics, activists, lawyers, doctors, writers — united in our desire to make a difference on the ground and at policy-level.

Maruah means "Dignity" in Malay, Singapore's national language. We are keen to impress that Human Rights is all about maintaining, restoring and reclaiming one's dignity at the individual, regional and international level.

For further information, please visit <http://www.maruah.org>

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<sup>1</sup> **ASEM** (the Asia-Europe Meeting) is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation. It brings together Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam, the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Commission. <http://www.aseminfoboard.org>