

Editorial Note

Challenges for Sustainable Urban Transformation in ASEAN Countries

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EDITOR

Although in this edition only one paper that specifically examines cities in the Southeast Asia region, I would like to frame this edition in the context of sustainable urban transformation in ASEAN. Cities in ASEAN countries are heading in the cross road. It is projected that urbanization level in ASEAN would be about 55,60 percent in 2030, and this means that about 405 million people will reside and depend their lives on urban environment. While the growth of cities across ASEAN has been broadly linked to increase in prosperity and economic progress, the region's rapid urbanization has also created many negative impacts. Several negative impacts have been documented such as: water and air pollutions, traffic congestions, urban heat islands, climate change, disasters, and social inequality.

The problems of urban water, especially, is addressed in quite detail in the first paper in this edition, entitled "**Assessment of Basin-scale Water Stress using Geographic Information Systems in Southeast Asian Countries with Megacities**, by Taishi Yazawa, Akito Morita, and Toshiyuki Shimizu. In Indonesia, several environmental issues also have been addressed by several papers including "**Village Development Sustainability Analysis: A case study in Cijeruk, Bogor Regency**" by Mujio, Rindiani Agustina Rahayu, Novida Waskitaningsih, and Edy Mulyadi. While issues related to education and happiness is examined in the paper by Hanifah Umi Haryati, on her paper entitled "**The Effect of Education on Happiness, Self-Acceptance, and Family Harmony (Empirical Evidence from Indonesia)**". Further, issue related to the development of the IKN or usantara Capital for Indonesia is also addressed.

Several urban problems in ASEAN including Indonesia cities as illustrated in several papers in this edition, represent challenges faced by urbanization and urban development in ASEAN cities. These problems must be addressed immediately and comprehensively as they are threatening the quality life of urban residents. Cities in ASEAN have an important position and role in the context of global urbanization and urban development. Ensuring sustainable urban transformation in ASEAN can serve as

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a model for other cities in different parts of the world. The SDGs and the New Urban Agenda have already provided guidelines for various actions for urban development in ASEAN, but a longer visions as well as collaborative and concrete actions among ASEAN cities are needed to ensure sustainable urban transformation for the whole ASEAN cities.

This edition shows evidences that we need to emphasizes the importance of paying more *attention to the acceleration of urbanization and urban development in ASEAN. A more appropriate* direction is needed so that the urbanization and urban development in ASEAN can speed up the achievement of the SDGs and the NUA targets. In this case, it becomes important to strengthen the alignment between urban policies and development strategies.

Furthermore, urbanization and urban development in ASEAN must also be framed into a much longer time frame – it should go beyond 2030. A more comprehensive and longer perspective in ensuring sustainable urban transformation, at least until 2050. In particular, ASEAN should pay more attention to the development of small and secondary cities that have an increasingly important role in ensuring the welfare and justice of all populations in ASEAN. Special attentions, mitigation and adaptation strategies for coastal cities under real threats of climate change and sea-water rise is also a must.

Finally, more effective collaborations in the field of urban development must be further exercised among ASEAN members to ensure sustainable urban transformation in the region. ASEAN's success in ensuring sustainable urban transformation is important not only for ASEAN, but also for the whole global community. ASEAN must and can be one of the models for sustainable urban transformation, not only for ASIA, but for the entire world as well.

I do hope that several research papers and policy papers in this ediction provide significant contribution in ensuring sustainable urban transformation in ASEAN cities.