

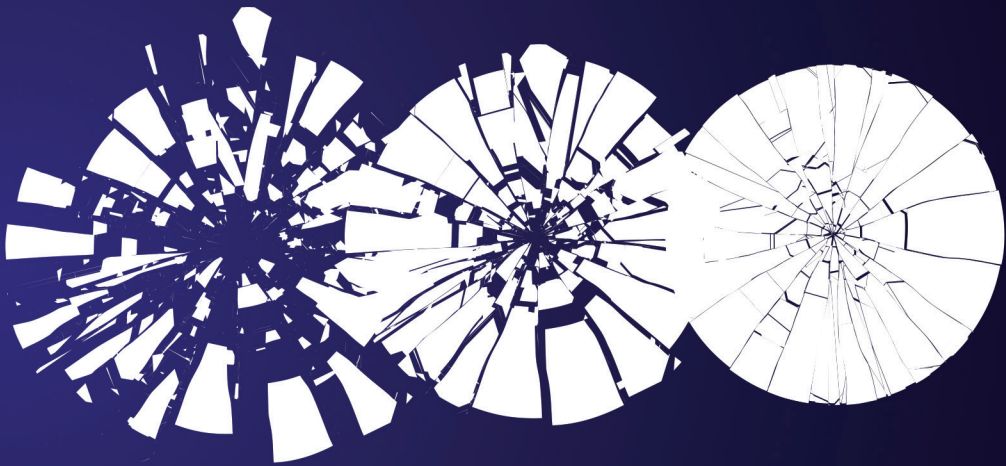
| PROGRAMME



**PRA<sup>X</sup>IS**  
PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

# From fracture to future

7 August 2025 | Hilton Kuala Lumpur



## Partners







# ISIS Malaysia

The Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia was established on 8 April 1983 with a mandate to advance Malaysia's strategic interests. As an autonomous research organisation, we focus on foreign policy and security; economics and trade; social policy and nation-building; technology and cyber; and climate and energy.

For more than four decades, ISIS Malaysia has been at the forefront of evidence-based policymaking as well as Track 2 diplomacy, promoting the exchange of views and opinions at the national and international level. We also play a role in fostering closer regional integration and international cooperation through various forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, ASEAN Institutes of Strategic & International Studies network, Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Network of East Asian Think-Tanks, Network of ASEAN-China Think-Tanks and ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Dialogue.



## PRAXIS and the *PRAXIS* process

**PRAXIS** is ISIS Malaysia's flagship public policy conference, designed to bridge ideas and to translate theory into practice. Since 2011, PRAXIS has convened policymakers, private sector, civil society and academia to engage in topics of national interests.

**PRAXIS** distinguishes itself through the **PRAXIS process** – embedding a research process to deliver impact from end to end. This process begins well before the conference with closed-door roundtables and consultations that bring together stakeholders and policymakers to identify core issues, shape agendas and frame the questions that matter. Post-conference, discussions are synthesised with cutting-edge analysis from ISIS Malaysia's researchers to produce actionable, pragmatic policy briefs to help advance dialogue to decision.

### Pre-conference

Identifying emerging problems

### Conference

Considering policy options

### Post-conference

Influencing decision-making



**You are here**



# Theme

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**The global order is coming apart at the seams.** Trade barriers worldwide are climbing to heights unseen in modern history, all while the multilateral rules-based trading system remains defective. Hard-won climate commitments achieved over decades are backsliding, while increasing global fragmentation threatens the foundations of Malaysia's economic development.

**As familiar international frameworks dissolve, the world grows more fragmented, uncertain and dangerous.** Malaysia cannot afford to stand idle. This moment offers Malaysia the opportunity to shape the next generation of regional norms around trade, climate and connectivity – and to strengthen our economic and physical ties across ASEAN and beyond.

**This year's theme, *From fracture to future*, asks what comes after the old normal – and how Malaysia could shape today's global fractures into its future advantage.** It explores how the nation can build on its regional leadership roles and broaden its global engagement to shape its national identity, economic, diplomatic and social future. It encourages participants to look both outward and forward, to revisit core national priorities and contemplate Malaysia's growing place in the region and the wider world.

# Programme

## 7 August 2025

0800–0845	Registration
0900–0905	<b>Welcoming remarks</b>  <b>Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah</b> Chairman ISIS Malaysia
0905–0945	<b>Keynote address</b>  <b>YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz</b> Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry
0945–1015	Break
1015–1130	<b>Session 1</b> <b>Malaysia and ASEAN in the next-generation trading order</b>
1130–1245	<b>Session 2</b> <b>Shaping Southeast Asia's climate security for Malaysia's future</b>
1245–1345	Lunch
1345–1500	<b>Session 3</b> <b>Malaysia's Southern Corridor as a model for cross-border connectivity</b>
1500–1600	<b>Fireside chat</b>  <b>YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong</b> Minister of Human Resources
1600–1605	<b>Closing remarks</b>  <b>Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah</b> Chairman ISIS Malaysia
1630	End



## Keynote address

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**YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz**  
Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry

YB Tengku Zafrul is responsible for growing the manufacturing industry and trade, as well as attracting investments into the country. He was in banking for more than 25 years and was the CEO of CIMB Group – a regional role in ASEAN – before being appointed Malaysia's finance minister during the pandemic. In his current role, he spearheaded the formulation of various key industrial policies, including Malaysia's New Industrial Master Plan 2030, Chemical Industry Roadmap 2030, National Semiconductor Strategy and Green Investment Strategy. During Malaysia's ASEAN 2025 chairmanship, his ministry led the formulation of 18 priority economic deliverables to advance ASEAN's economic integration by enhancing intra-ASEAN trade, strengthening economic relations with key trading partners and pushing for regional frameworks in areas, such as electric vehicles and AI. Since April, he has also led tariff negotiations on Malaysian US-bound exports.



## Fireside chat

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**YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong**  
Minister of Human Resources

YB Sim is the Bukit Mertajam MP and was appointed to his current post in December 2023. He is a former deputy finance minister and deputy youth and sports minister. Prior to his election as a member of parliament, Sim served as councillor in Majlis Bandaraya Seberang Perai, one of the largest municipal councils in the country. He also sits on the governing board of the Penang Institute, a leading public policy think-tank. He is the author of four books: *The Audacity to Think: An Invitation to Rethink Politics*; *Being Malaysia*; an anthology of Malay poems, *Dalam Salju Ada Bunga* (2018); and a contemporary sociopolitical critique of the Malay classic Hikayat Hang Tuah, *Hang Tuah: Adiwira Bangsa*. In 2012, he was named a Young Global Leader of the Geneva-based World Economic Forum.



## Welcoming and closing remarks

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### **Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah**

Chairman  
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS)  
Malaysia

Prof Faiz leads the institute's policy development and Track 2 diplomacy, including through the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) and Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC). He is also the Malaysian representative to the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons (ARF EEP) meeting, co-chair of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Good Governance.



## Session 1

# Malaysia and ASEAN in the next-generation trading order

As the current global trade order fractures under the weight of geopolitical tensions, Malaysia faces large risks but even larger choices. Tariffs and trade restrictions have surged since the start of the year, creating substantial headwinds for small open economies like Malaysia.

Malaysia's current response centres on dialogue and diversification. However, efforts to deepen intra-ASEAN trade and regional integration have come up against the gravity of competing national interests and rising resource nationalism.

This session explores how these external pressures are reshaping Malaysia. Is Malaysia doing enough to mitigate trade risks and strengthen economic resilience? Can ASEAN economic integration succeed despite divergent interests and broader global uncertainty? How can Malaysia and its ASEAN partners influence the changing international trading order?

## Moderator



### **Arividya Arimuthu**

Senior Fellow  
ISIS Malaysia

Arividya is a senior fellow in the chairman's office. She specialises in WTO and EU laws and has more than 20 years' experience in trade negotiations. She is a former senior director for strategic negotiations at MITI and chief negotiator for numerous high-stakes free trade agreement negotiations, including CPTPP, for which she led the ratification and implementation for Malaysia.

## Speakers



### **Prof Dr Sufian Jusoh**

Director of Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS)  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Dr Sufian is a professor of international trade and investment at IKMAS. He is an expert in international trade and investment, ASEAN and regional integration, and international development. He leads a team supporting the ASEAN chairmanship 2025, working on the ASEAN Vision 2045, ASEAN Economic Community Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and ASEAN Higher Education Declaration. He is a former delegate to the High-Level Task Force for ASEAN Community Vision Post-2025. He also played a key role in the success of Malaysia's chairmanship of APEC 2020, leading to the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040.



### **Datin Lorela Chia**

Founding President  
Malaysia Association of Sustainable Supply Chains

Datin Chia is vice-president I of the Machinery & Engineering Industries Federation. Her work bridges industrialisation, sustainability and social impact drawn from nearly three decades of experience in B2B trade, cross-border expansion and ecosystem development. She has led engagements across ASEAN, South Asia, Africa and Latin America, with a portfolio that spans supply chain resilience, inclusive innovation and sectoral transformation across engineering, fashion, halal, intellectual property and special-needs accessibility.

**HE Dato' Astanah Abdul Aziz**

Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN  
ASEAN Secretariat

Dato' Astanah supports the ASEAN secretary-general in developing and maintaining cooperation in political and security matters with member states, dialogue partners, and international and regional organisations. She leads the ASEAN Political-Security Community Department at the ASEAN Secretariat and provides leadership in the implementation of the APSC Blueprint 2025 and its successor document, the APSC Strategic Plan of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. She has served in various capacities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, including as ambassador as well as representative at the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations, New York.



## Session 2

# Shaping Southeast Asia's climate security for Malaysia's future

Climate change threatens Southeast Asia, intensifying vulnerabilities through heatwaves, floods and rising sea levels. These shocks spill into national security, affecting food security, infrastructure and financial stability. Geopolitical tensions and backsliding of global climate commitments further imperil the 1.5°C goal.

Southeast Asia's limited capacity to balance development with ecological transition and inadequate international support exacerbates its risks. However, Malaysia has an opportunity to lead a self-reliant, region-wide climate agenda. Recognising climate change as a security issue enables a more strategic approach to resilience-building.

How can Malaysia lead ASEAN's climate security agenda? What are key domestic and cross-border climate hot spots that demand immediate attention? How can diverse political, economic and environmental contexts be reconciled in a joint response?

## Moderator



### **Kieran Li Nair**

Senior Researcher  
ISIS Malaysia

Kieran's research interests lie in international relations, sustainable development as well as equity and climate justice. She acted as a Malaysian youth representative to the 28th and 29th Conference of Parties. Beyond her professional experience, she has extensive involvement in civil society advocacy, most crucially with the Malaysian Youth Delegation and Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance.

## Speakers



### **Tan Sri Prof Dr Jemilah Mahmood**

Executive Director  
Sunway Centre for Planetary Health

Prof Jemilah has more than two decades' experience managing crises in health, disasters and conflict settings. She holds advisory council roles in the government on climate and higher education. She is also an adjunct professor at Universiti Malaya, sustainability adviser at AirAsia and national adviser to the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. She sits on the boards of Roche in Switzerland and Norwegian Refugee Council. She currently co-chairs the World Economic Forum Steering Committee on Climate and Health and is a board member of the Global Future Council for Clean Air.



### **Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony**

Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies  
S Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Prof Caballero-Anthony holds the president's chair for international relations and security studies. She heads the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies and is also an associate dean at Nanyang Technological University. She has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and led research projects on international security and global governance. Her latest publications include *Dual-Use Research of Concern Landscape in Southeast Asia: Prioritisation, Gaps and Challenges*; *Climate Security in Southeast Asia: Navigating Concepts, Approaches and Practices*; *Human Security and Empowerment in Asia*; and *Conflict Management and Atrocity Prevention in Southeast Asia: Making ASEAN 'Fit for Purpose'*.

**Tomokazu Serizawa**

Programme Specialist

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok  
Thailand

Serizawa is a specialist in climate and security risks and plays a leading role in the implementation of UNDP's Climate, Peace and Security offer for Asia-Pacific. He provides technical support on climate, peace and security to member states, international and regional organisations, the research community and civil society. He has extensive experience in conflict and post-conflict settings with the thematic topics of peacebuilding, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, small arms control, stabilisation, prevention of violent extremism, among others.

### Session 3

## Malaysia's Southern Corridor as a model for cross-border connectivity

Malaysia's Southern Corridor is emerging as a nexus for cross-border integration and economic transformation. Backed by RM141.7 billion in investments, it aims to attract high-value industries and strengthen regional integration. However, the corridor's success hinges on addressing challenges, such as talent shortage, uneven job creation and potential environment impacts.

This session looks at what types of physical and digital infrastructure are necessary to unlock cross-border trade and attract investment. What incentives and policies will best attract and retain global talent and innovative firms to the region? Critically, how can Malaysia set the Southern Corridor within a broader ASEAN strategy for resilient, rules-based connectivity, offering a blueprint for economic integration in a fractured global order?

## Moderator



### **Tan Sri Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria**

Director

Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS)

Tan Sri Rebecca is the pro chancellor of Sunway University. She is the former secretary-general of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and executive director of the APEC Secretariat based in Singapore. She chaired the body that drafted the 2015 and 2025 ASEAN Economic Community Blueprints. In 2024, she was featured in *Forbes'* third annual 50 Over 50: Asia list, which showcases 50 inspirational women over the age of 50 from across the Asia-Pacific region.

## Speakers



### **Datuk Syed Mohamed Syed Ibrahim**

President & Chief Executive

Johor Corporation

Datuk Syed Mohamed was appointed to the current post in January 2020. With more than 30 years' experience spanning banking, property, investment and development, he has held senior leadership roles at Sime Darby Land, Encorp Bhd, TH Properties and Iskandar Investment Bhd. He expanded his international portfolio as COO of Knowledge Economic City in Madinah, Saudi Arabia. He is currently serving as chairman of Kulim (Malaysia) Bhd, JLand Group, Waqaf An-Nur, KPJ Healthcare University and Malaysia Steel Works. He also sits on the boards of Yayasan Sultan Ibrahim, Yayasan Kanser Tunku Laksamana Johor, Johor Centre for Sustainability and Johor Darul Ta'zim Football Club. He holds adjunct professorships at the Faculty of Built Environment & Surveying at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and School of Government at Universiti Utara Malaysia.



### **Dr Fauziah Zen**

Senior Economist

Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

Dr Fauziah has more than 17 years' expertise in public finance, regulatory impact assessment, infrastructure development and climate financing. She is also a faculty member at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia, and visiting professor at Hitotsubashi University in Japan. She has had held several roles in economic policy and research, including serving as deputy head at Indonesia National Research Council, adviser to the finance minister on fiscal decentralisation and as chief economist of Nusantara Capital City.

**Dr Francis E Hutchinson**

Senior Fellow  
ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Dr Hutchinson coordinates the Malaysia studies programme at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. His research interests include state-business relations, elections, federalism, decentralisation, local economic development and cross-border regions. He is the managing editor of *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies* and has authored or edited nine books, including: *Mirror Images in Different Frames? Johor, the Riau Islands and Competition for Investment from Singapore*; *Asia and the Middle-Income Trap*; and *The SIJORI Series* – a trilogy that explores and analyses linkages between Singapore, Johor and the Riau Islands.

## **Fireside chat**

# **Malaysia's human resources and jobs' agenda for the next global era**

**YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong**

Minister of Human Resources

Malaysia's labour landscape is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by technological advances, demographic shifts, evolving migration patterns and ongoing labour market reforms. Human Resources Minister YB Steven Sim joins ISIS Malaysia Chairman Datuk Prof Faiz Abdullah for a candid fireside conversation on the nation's future-of-work agenda. The session will explore key reforms since 2023, including wage improvements, enhanced worker protections and upskilling initiatives. It will also address pressing issues, such as gig workers' legislation, migrant labour policies, progressive wage policies, AI-driven employment trends and the implications of the ASEAN Year of Skills 2025 on cross-border mobility. With a strong focus on inclusive and future-ready labour strategies, the discussion will highlight the minister's top priorities for securing Malaysia's workforce in the next global era.

## Partners



### Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Malaysia

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is non-governmental independent think-tank headquartered in Germany with around 110 offices worldwide. KAS has been active in Malaysia for more than 50 years, promoting democracy, good governance, rule of law, and regional cooperation. Through partnerships with key institutions, KAS supports inclusive dialogue and informed policymaking on national and regional issues.

KAS Malaysia's enduring collaboration with ISIS Malaysia reflects a shared commitment to open, evidence-based discourse. Over the years, we have worked together to advance conversations on Malaysia's strategic priorities and ASEAN's evolving landscape. PRAXIS 2025 builds on this relationship, offering a platform for critical thinking and exchange at a time of global uncertainty. Initiatives like this also help strengthen the bilateral relationship between Germany and Malaysia, rooted in trust, dialogue and shared values.



### Sunway Centre for Planetary Health (SCPH)

The Sunway Centre for Planetary Health (SCPH) at Sunway University is a think-and-do tank dedicated to advancing the understanding and practice of planetary health. Through research, education, and advocacy, SCPH explores the intricate connections between human health and the health of our planet.

Positioned within a leading academic institution dedicated to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, SCPH integrates policy advocacy, evidence-based research, experiential learning, and community-driven initiatives to foster meaningful change grounded in equity and intergenerational justice. Partnerships are central to our work, as we co-create innovative solutions for a healthier planet for all.

# Notes

# Notes





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