

Indo-Pacific Era Strategic Centre

Mapping the Geopolitics of the Next Indo-Pacific Century.

November 2022

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Rebuilding Regional Economies through Women's Economic Empowerment



Photo Credits: Icaro Cook Vieiro for CIFOR (top); Carsten ten Brink/Flickr.com (bottom left); UN Women/Nicolas Axelrod (bottom right)

The current pandemic has wreaked havoc, over the last two years, on the productive capacity of ASEAN's economy, which may make the economic shocks from this pandemic [deeper and longer lasting](#). A return to a 'business as usual' scenario is no longer a feasible plan of action.

In addressing economic recovery, the [ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework \(ACRF\)](#) has highlighted five broad strategies, namely: to enhance health systems, strengthen human security, maximise the potential of intra-ASEAN market and broader economic integration, accelerate inclusive digital transformation, and advance towards a more sustainable and resilient future. The recovery framework also acknowledges the need for inclusivity in both design and implementation and gives due recognition to the vulnerable groups and sectors that are hardest hit by the pandemic, in the hope that moving forward and engaging in recovery

strategies will not lead to a widening of inequalities, in any form.

It is heartening to note that there are specific priorities in the framework that hopes to address the severe setbacks on human capital accumulation including prioritising digital skills and higher education, re-skilling and up-skilling for employment, strengthening labour policies through social dialogue, and most importantly, for all this to be done with strong consideration to the gendered impact of this pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability and disadvantages faced by women. At the same time, it had also showcased their resourcefulness and resilience, especially in times of crises.

Pre-existing gender discrimination connects with the economic insecurities of women. This is especially so in this global crisis as the lockdown and closures of economies have shown unprecedented adverse impacts on the working lives of women. Economic

security can be the way that other aspects of human security – health, food, political, and individual, for example – are measured. It allows women a level of freedom. It prevents further victimisation through forced prostitution, slavery, human trafficking, and a host of other vile operations women may be forced into just to survive both during and after crises. But in moving forward, there is also a need for care in the type of economic opportunities provided, which can, under the guise of financial independence and “empowerment” merely perpetuate further inequalities through imbalanced power relations between men and women in the workplace.

After crises, the general pattern is to usually fall back to known and comfortable ways of acting and doing – and letting a crisis “go to waste” as an impetus for change for the better. Better recovery strategies that are sustainable get sacrificed when reverting to previous methods

of operation. But it is this phase of recovery that is most pertinent to insecurities and inequalities faced by women and other disadvantaged groups. Greater inclusion at this point will lead to more effective policies because they will be based on realities on the ground—especially in the aftermath of an upheaval.

Attempting to build back better, with greater inclusivity, is to be mindful to promulgate empowering economic strategies. This mean engaging with different groups of people and allowing for economic opportunities where disadvantaged people have a say in how such opportunities will be designed and offered – for instance, the ability to organise initiatives to meet their needs, being able to allocate their time between work in the public and private spheres, and fair remuneration for work done. This is especially the case for women workers.

Engaging women as leaders and decision-makers in [COVID-](#)

[19 response and recovery](#) plans, including stimulus measures and other support to the business sector, is essential to its effectiveness, as well as to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable workers are met. Therefore, including and investing in women is key to [post-pandemic recovery](#). Women’s economic empowerment will be essential to ensure that the economic recovery from this global pandemic, in ASEAN and elsewhere, is both rapid and sustainable.

Suggested Readings

- ADB (2021). “Asian Development Outlook, 2021”. Asian Development Bank. Manila Philippines. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/692111/ado2021-highlights.pdf>
- ASEAN (2020) “ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework”. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2-FINAL-ACRF_adopted-37th-ASEAN-Summit_12112020.pdf
- Guivarra, Julie-Ann (2021). Investing in women is key to post pandemic recovery” *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/international-womens-day-investing-in-women-is-key-to-post-pandemic-recovery/>
- UN Women. (undated) “Women as a force for accelerated and Inclusive economic recovery post COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific”. UN Action Brief. <https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/WEA-ActionBrief1-Overarching.pdf>

CLIMATE CHANGE

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

World's largest ocean reserve off Hawaii has spillover benefits nearby, study finds

Six years ago, the then US president, Barack Obama, created the world's largest fully protected ocean reserve by expanding the existing Pa-pahānaumokuākea marine national monument in Hawaii, a world heritage site that include islands, atolls and archeological treasures. Catches of yellowfin tuna, known as ahi in Hawaiian, were found to have risen by 54% between 2016 and 2019 near the reserve, within which fishing is banned, while catches of bigeye tuna rose by 12%.

Karen McVeigh

The Guardian

21 October 2022

Here's how to deliver safe drinking water to all, according to the UN

Providing safe drinking water and sanitation for everyone on the planet is crucial, but a quarter of the world's population is still being left behind. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, affecting water security and disrupting supply. Investing in water and sanitation is critical to health, economic growth, and the environment.

World Economic Forum

28 October 2022

Singapore records wettest October in 40 years with rainy days expected to continue into November

This is the highest number of rain days occurring in October at the Changi climate station since the 1980s and surpasses the previous record of 21 days observed in 1985 and 2003.

Channel News Asia

1 November 2022

COP27: Why the latest UN climate conference matters

The Egyptian hosts have set themselves a tough challenge. Last year's UN climate conference in Glasgow delivered a host of pledges on emission cuts, finance, net zero, forest protection and more. Egypt says their conference will be about implementing these pledges. What that really means is it will be all about cash, and specifically getting wealthy nations to come good on their promises of finance to help the developing world tackle climate change.

Justin Rowlett

BBC

5 November 2022

UN climate talks open in Egypt, compensation fund on agenda

Global talks to tackle worsening climate change started off on a positive note in Egypt with nations agreeing to discuss a fund for poorer nations suffering loss and damage from increasingly extreme climate impacts. The conference discussed the shape of the fund and sources of financing, but it could take another year or two to flesh out all the details.

David Fogarty

The Straits Times

7 November 2022

World has nine years to avert catastrophic warming, study shows

Nations will likely burn through their remaining carbon budget in less than a decade if they do not significantly reduce greenhouse gas emission.

Sarah Kaplan

The Washington Post

11 November 2022

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Global carbon budget 2022

Reaching zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 entails a total anthropogenic CO₂ emissions linear decrease by about 0.4 GtC (1.4 GtCO₂) each year, comparable to the decrease during 2020, highlighting the scale of the action needed.

Pierre Friedlingstein, et al.

Earth System Science Data, Vol. 14, pp: 4811-4900

2022

State of the world's drinking water: An urgent call to action to accelerate progress on ensuring safe drinking water for all

In the last two decades, investment in drinking water services has led to considerable increases in access. Two billion people globally gained access to safely managed drinking water services. In 2020, 74% of the world's population used safely managed drinking water, up from 62% in 2000. Despite this progress, there are wide geographical disparities, and 2 billion people still do not use safely managed drinking water.

WHO, UNICEF, World Bank

Geneva: World Health Organization

2022

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

World Soil Day 2022

World Soil Day 2022 (#WorldSoilDay), with its campaign slogan "Soils: Where food begins", aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, increasing soil awareness and encouraging societies to improve soil health.

Worldwide

5 December 2022

The UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) (Part 2)

The main objective of the Conference is to adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. It recognises that urgent policy action globally, regionally and nationally is required to transform economic, social and financial models so the trends that have exacerbated biodiversity loss will stabilise by 2030 and allow for the recovery of natural ecosystems, with net improvements by 2050.

Montreal, Canada

7-19 December 2022

ENERGY SECURITY

NEWS AND COMMENTARIES

Solving the energy challenge

Thailand can lead the way in Southeast Asia by charting a path for a bio, circular and green economy that decarbonises the energy system while providing affordable energy.

Paul Everingham

Bangkok Post

26 October 2022

Southeast Asia should diversify energy sources, learn from Europe's Russian 'mistake': Global agency chief

Southeast Asia should invest more in clean energy to reduce its long-term dependence on fossil fuels, which are prone to price fluctuations and could have adverse impacts on the countries' economies.

Fabian Koh

Channel News Asia

26 October 2022

Asia's energy supply looks secure — even as Europe scrambles

Asia-Pacific's power supply remains secure mainly because it uses a lot of coal. Unlike Europe which relies on gas for energy creation, gas is less relevant to Asia.

Su-Lin Tan

CNBC

1 November 2022

South-east Asia grapples with challenge of 'just transition'

Southeast Asia needs significant inbound investment to achieve the scale of transition needed and there is a need to coordinate global finance to make this happen.

Wong Pei Ting

The Business Times

2 November 2022

Climate resilience of energy infrastructures in Southeast Asia

This article provides an overview of the impact of climate change on energy infrastructures in Southeast Asia. It also outlines best practices in climate modelling and adaptation of energy systems, with the help of multiple examples.

Mirza Sadaqat Huda

ISEAS Perspective 2022/108

7 November 2022

In search of energy security

The director of Brookings' Energy Security and Climate Initiative, Samantha Gross, discusses with F&D's Marjorie Henriquez how the crisis started, the implications for developing economies, and the risks of a fragmented energy market. Gross argues that the energy crisis should be the driver of a transition to clean energy—not an impediment.

Marjorie Henriquez

IMF Finance and Development

Upcoming December Issue

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Examining Southeast Asia's diplomacy on nuclear disarmament and nuclear security: Shared norms and a regional agenda

This article highlights how, beyond advocating for a nuclear-weapon-free world, ASEAN is developing its cooperation on nuclear security, assisted by a network of regional agencies, and how this is enhancing the region's nuclear governance agenda.

Mely Caballero-Anthony and Julius Cesar Trajano

Asian Journal of Peacebuilding, Vol. 10, No. 2

2022

Reassessing the impact of hydropower development project along the Mekong River Basin in Cambodia

This chapter aims to examine the impacts of the hydropower-development project along the Mekong River on the displacement of affected local communities in Cambodia.

Rasmeykanyka Bin and Ponleu Soun

Chapter 5 in The Displaced: Disrupted Trade, Labour, and Politics in the Mekong River Basin

Tokyo: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Japan

2022

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Symposium on International Safeguards: Reflecting on the Past and Anticipating the Future

This brought together global stakeholders in support of IAEA safeguards. It is an opportunity for Member State safeguards regulatory authorities, the research and development (R&D) community, industry and civil society to identify challenges and opportunities for IAEA safeguards, showcase research, share ideas, and build partnerships.

Recorded Conference in Vienna, Austria

31 October–4 November 2022

Renewable Energy Markets 2023

This annual online conference includes panels on regional renewable demand and trends, corporate buyer perspectives, renewable energy policies, new procurement models, and more.

Singapore

7 December 2022 (Call for Speakers deadline)

FOOD SECURITY

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

The danger of misguided food production policies: The case of Sri Lanka

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has aggravated food insecurity world-wide and encouraged various countries to find new ways to manage this threat, including policies to substitute costly imported agricultural inputs like synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. Sri Lanka's recent experience shows that drastic policy changes can have disastrous political and societal consequences.

Paul Teng and Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

RSIS Commentary

28 October 2022

Russian Federation's suspension of participation in Black Sea Grain Initiative Risks impacting global food prices, top officials tells Security Council

Russian decided to leave the Black Sea Grain Initiative owing to its claims of attacks against its ships by Ukraine and its allies. Such actions can have severe impacts on global food prices.

UN Security Council (Press Release)

31 October 2022

International currency instability and food security: Time to rebuild "real food economies"?

Debt-distressed countries are handicapped in riding the rising costs of imported food and farming inputs amidst monetary policy shifts internationally. It is timely to rebuild "real food economies" to improve food availability and affordability, hence averting food crises and ensuing political and social instability.

Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

RSIS Commentary

31 October 2022

Putin: We could quit grain deal again, but would not block grain for Turkey

Russia has re-joined the Black Sea Grain Initiative, following a call between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, as well as a written guarantee that Ukraine would not use the secure shipping corridors to strike against Russia's ports.

Mark Trevalyan and Polina Devitt

Reuters

2 November 2022

How has China maintained domestic food sta- bility amid global food crises?

China's public sector engagement with its private sector in the agriculture sector has been key to boosting the productivity of its farming sector and to supporting its smallholder farmers.

Yuan Zhang

World Economic Forum

7 November 2022

Uncertainty in the Black Sea: Implications for Asia's food security

There has been increasing uncertainty, with Russia opting out from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and re-joining five days later. In this brief period, wheat and maize prices jumped for commodity traders. These events portend continuing instability in supply of essential food items amid the Ukraine war and putting Asia's food security at risk.

Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

RSIS Commentary

9 November 2022

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Understanding the policy discourse within the formulation of the 2013 Indian National Food Se- curity Act

This study analyses the policy discussions surrounding the adoption of India's National Food Security Act (NFSA) in 2013, and identifies the opposing "pro-rights" and "pro-economy" positions.

Karl-Axel Lindgren and Tim Lang

Food Security, Vol. 14, pp. 1159–1173

2022

Economic integration and food security – The case of the AfCFTA

This study finds that trade integration within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) leads to higher food prices for food producing regions, and higher incomes as a whole. However, these should be accompanied by income support to lowest-income households employed in import-competing industries, as their food security can be adversely affected.

A. Simola, O. Boysen, E. Ferrari, V. Nechifor, and P. Boulanger

Global Food Security, Vol. 35

2022

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Featuring research and innovation to address food security in Africa amidst climate change

In this session, CGIAR and partners unveiled knowledge and initiatives to foster transformative adaptation approaches and respond sustainably to food security challenges, addressing root causes of vulnerability while contributing to sustaining peace.

Recorded Webinar

7 November 2022

Official UNFCCC side event at COP27: Reaching women farmers with climate resilience strategies in Africa and Asia

The event explored gender responsive approaches and solutions to growing climate resilience in complex situations of vulnerability and food insecurity, fragility and conflict.

Recorded Webinar

11 November 2022

HEALTH SECURITY

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Tuberculosis deaths and disease increase during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted tuberculosis services in many countries, but its impact on the TB response has been particularly severe. Ongoing conflicts across Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East have further exacerbated the situation for vulnerable populations.

World Health Organization

27 October 2022

On World Cities Day 2022, WHO calls on countries to “act local to go global”

Urban population is increasing globally. City leaders are in a unique position to understand local needs and respond rapidly to changing conditions to safeguard health.

World Health Organization

28 October 2022

Dengue vaccine arrives as global warming boosts infection risk

Each year, Dengue afflicts about 400 million people. The world's first vaccine, Dengvaxia, was introduced seven years ago by Sanofi. Japan's Takeda Pharmaceutical produced another dengue vaccine recently, which sidestep shortcomings of previous vaccine.

Kanoko Matsuyama

Bloomberg

7 November 2022

Climate change and global health: What actions are healthcare leaders taking?

Climate change is wreaking havoc on human health through increased risk of disease, injuries and death, but the healthcare sector is responsible for 4% of global emissions. It is imperative for the sector to adopt more sustainable practices.

Susanne Andreae

World Economic Forum

8 November 2022

Asian nations still hedging in global health diplomacy race

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the rivalry between China and Japan in Southeast Asia. Health diplomacy is viewed as an essential tool to serve and strengthen their political interests in the region.

Jati Satrio (360info)

Jakarta Post

9 November 2022

Ending the Covid-19 public health threat: Inquirer contributor

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the healthcare sector. Applying the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic will help guide healthcare on the right track.

Ma. Dominga “Minguita” B. Padilla

The Straits Times

9 November 2022

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Setting global research priorities for urban health

In view of the challenges facing the world's urban population, member States and non-governmental organizations have called on WHO to support implementation of effective multisectoral interventions to improve the health of urban residents. In response, WHO has developed the Urban Health Research Agenda (UHRA) – a set of global urban health research priorities for 2022–2032.

World Health Organization

2022

Global health diplomacy—reconstructing power and governance

Global health has since become integral to geopolitics during the COVID-19 pandemic. This Series paper explores how international relations concepts and theories have been applied to better understand the role of power in shaping positions, negotiations, and outcomes in global health diplomacy.

Ilona Kickbusch and Austin Liu

The Lancet, Vol.399, Issue 10341, pp.2156-2166

2022

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

World Health Summit 2022 session - Addressing Health and Migration as a Global Priority in a Changing World

Co-hosted by the WHO Health and Migration Programme and the M8 Alliance, this session at the World Health Summit 2022 outlined the challenges and opportunities that exist within both research and policy to address health and migration as a global priority.

Recorded conference

16 October 2022

2nd ASEAN Digital Public Health Conference

The Conference continues to bring together policymakers, health authorities, multi-disciplinary experts, and leaders from industry participants and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to share experiences and engage in holistic discussions on the benefits, risks and challenges associated with the adoption of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in healthcare.

Brunei Darussalam (Hybrid)

22-23 November 2022

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Here's how Japan is using technology to mitigate natural disasters

With several areas in Japan vulnerable to tsunamis, Japanese local governments have invested in disaster mitigation measures including financial assistance, the use of technology in facilitating communication during evacuation, and public-private partnerships.

Naoko Kutty

World Economic Forum

1 November 2022

Towards more inclusive disaster risk-management policies

Studies have shown that disasters disproportionately impact women, girls, persons with disabilities, ethnic and racial minorities, and indigenous peoples. This is due to pre-existing social conditions, highlighting the importance of taking into account these different needs when planning response policies.

Urška Zrinski and Manjola Malo

World Bank

1 November 2022

As climate disasters grow more costly, who should pay the bill?

With attribution science now being able to pinpoint how exactly climate change worsens disasters such as sea level rise and heatwaves, countries more vulnerable to natural hazards are pushing to develop a pool of money for "loss and damages".

Alejandra Borunda

National Geographic

4 November 2022

A humanitarian lens on COP27: Loss and damage, debt relief, and climate justice

Loss and damage financing will be a core agenda item to be discussed over the duration of COP27 amid recent humanitarian emergencies as consequences of the ever-intensifying climate crisis.

Irwin Loy

The New Humanitarian

7 November 2022

Real-time data are needed to monitor health after disasters

Timely health and exposure data in the wake of disasters are rarely gathered in real time, which limits research on the effect of disasters on the health of those affected. Technology can now be used to fill in these gaps.

Susan Arnold

STAT

8 November 2022

Natural disaster-hit countries get automatic debt freeze option

Under a programme by the International Capital Market Association, countries vulnerable to natural hazards would be able to defer payments for a maximum of two years if defined trigger events such as droughts or floods occur.

Marc Jones

Reuters

9 November 2022

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Disaster recovery: Lessons from around the world

This report looks at six disaster recovery programmes around the world and highlights three common actions for a successful recovery. These include agreeing on a holistic vision and clear priorities, standing up a strong in-country institution to coordinate recovery as well as coordinating external partners and supporting collaboration.

David Chinn et. al.

McKinsey & Company

2022

Where it matters most: Smart climate financing for the hardest hit people

This reports examines the current gaps in humanitarian financing and sets out a vision for a smart, risk-informed and locally led approach. This approach would require collective effort by stakeholders involved in mobilising, governing and spending money for addressing climate risks.

International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies

2022

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rethinking Humanitarianism | Is 'decolonised aid' an oxymoron?

This podcast examines the two schools of thought when it comes to decolonising aid – i.e., to reform the aid structure or to end aid altogether.

Podcast

19 October 2022

Rethinking Humanitarianism | Can Global Public Investment replace aid financing as we know it?

With humanitarian emergencies intensifying and resources being strained around the world, Global Public Investment is being increasingly being viewed as a plausible solution for a traditional aid system reaching its limits.

Podcast

2 November 2022

MIGRATION

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

The invisible migration crisis on von der Leyen's doorstep

Migration has become one of the most divisive issues in the EU. As migration levels increase, processing systems are coming under strain and anti-immigration sentiments are rising across Europe.

Barbara Moens et al.

Politico

28 October 2022

Post-pandemic recovery and the plight of ASEAN's migrant workers

COVID-19 has taken a significant toll on the job stability of Southeast Asia's migrant workers with many of the businesses employed them forced to halt operations.

Thong Sariputta

The Diplomat

3 November 2022

Act now: Migrant inclusion in climate action is an obligation, not an option

With the impacts of climate change increasingly driving human mobility globally, there is a need for states to strengthen international guidelines and policies on seeking inclusive solutions for those most affected people.

UN Network on Migration

3 November 2022

EU Home Affairs Commissioner to launch migration dialogues with Bangladesh & Pakistan

As part of a visit to Bangladesh and Pakistan, Commissioner Ylva Johansson will launch comprehensive dialogues on migration and mobility, allowing for annual discussions on these issues. Topics of conversation include increasing cooperation on legal migration as well as against migrant smuggling.

SchengenVisa News

10 November 2022

For Rohingya refugees, rising dangers and a long road to repatriation

Repatriation is still a faraway prospect for most Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. This is further hampered by the escalating violence in Myanmar and limited international humanitarian funding.

Rebecca L. Root

The New Humanitarian

10 November 2022

How AI can help us better prepare for climate migration

As the effects of climate change is set to intensify in coming years, AI will be particularly useful for its capabilities in predicting potential significant population displacement as a result of extreme weather events, allowing sufficient allocation of relief.

Injy Elhabrouk

World Economic Forum

10 November 2022

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Coping with Shocks: Migration and the Road to Resilience

This report looks at recent economic developments caused by COVID-19 and analyses its impact on migration in South Asia. It also discusses the risk scenarios of the present and provides policy recommendations.

Washington DC: World Bank

2022

People on the move in a changing climate – Linking policy, evidence and action

Based on existing knowledge and IOM's experience of working with its partners, this report outlines the main aspects of the human mobility and climate change nexus from a policy perspective.

Geneva: International Organization for Migration

2022

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Climate mobility and labour migration in a just transition

This event brings together experts from various sectors to discuss key priorities for decent work and just transitions that are inclusive of migrants.

Recorded Meeting

12 November 2022

2023 IMISCOE PhD School

Consisting of keynote lectures, discussion and interactive panels, this programme will offer a platform for a fruitful interdisciplinary exchange which will allow PhD researchers to develop creative approaches to the study of migration and develop new insights.

Workshop

24 – 28 April 2023