



ALA & WLN 'Riding Global Trends'

Joint Autumn Conference in Bangkok

25 – 28 September 2024



Conference Report

Thailand... 'The land of smiles' - this certainly proved to be the case for this inaugural joint conference between **ASEAN Legal Alliance (ALA)** and **Warwick Legal Network (WLN)** in the heart of Bangkok at The Pullman Bangkok King Power. With **'Riding Global Trends'** as our theme this conference has paved the way for an exciting and long-lasting global collaboration. It promises to bring significant growth and development to both networks as well as opportunities to build a deeper understanding of key global trends from experts in the fields of ESG, sustainability, AI, data, technology, and investments.

A special thanks must go to our hosts, **Promboon Sookatup** of **Blumenthal Richter & Sumet**, **Pawan Lertpayub** of **Prompt Legal Services**, and for expert and seamless organisation by **Aloysius Wee** and team at **ASEAN Legal Alliance**. We were given the warmest of welcomes to Bangkok and enjoyed a successful conference together. Thank you also to **Pullman Bangkok King Power Hotel** which offered excellent service and space for networking and discussion.

Wednesday 25th September Program

We were met with the warmest of welcomes and treated to a sumptuous cocktail reception of drinks and Thai food at host firm **Blumenthal Richter & Sumet** in their spectacular high-rise office in the business district. This was a wonderful opportunity to meet and mingle with delegates from the firm itself, some of their clients, and the ALA network. Thank you again to Pawan, Promboon, and all those at BRS and Prompt Legal for your hospitality.

In the evening, we walked to a highly regarded local restaurant **Northeast**, and sat down as one merry band, to enjoy conversation, laughter, and the most wonderful array of Thai food. Our evening concluded back at the hotel where some of us spent the evening dancing (to the Macarena!) and relaxing in our surroundings in the atmospheric **Glen Bar**. Having socialised all evening with members of WLN & ALA, we felt energised and excited for the commencement of the formal business programme over the next two days.



Thursday 26th September Internal Network Conference

Our internal conference was expertly chaired by **Aloysius Wee** – the Managing Principle of **Aquinas Law, Singapore** and Chairman of **ALA**. After an initial welcome from **Pawan** and **Promboon**, we listened to updates from both the ALA and WLN Boards. We then enjoyed and participated in the following insightful presentations and discussions:

- **ESG for Business in ASEAN**

Mr. Suvit Thammongkol (Vice President, Carbon Registry Thailand) presented the ways in which ESG (environmental, social and governance) will impact businesses. It is worth noting here that the following day's event on Friday 27th September was **Carbon Neutral**.

- **Shared Panel ALA & WLN: Experiences on ESG, Cross-border Data Protection & Technology**

This panel discussion was moderated by **Agnes Wong**, (Managing Partner, Syarikat Ong) and the panellists were **Carlo Gurioli** (Partner, Bureau Plattner), **David Elvira Benito** (Partner, Bufete Mañá-Krier-Elvira), and **Tracy Pan** (Managing Partner, Guangxi Wan Yi Singapore). This engaging discussion explored these global trends and was very well received by delegates with many valuable insights.

- **'The 2030 SDGs Game'**, facilitated by **Dr. Scott Smith** of **Assumption University, Thailand**. The workshop simulated a future world in 2030 and encouraged participants to explore the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The workshop was a fantastic opportunity for delegates to explore global challenges as well as enhancing team-based strategic thinking.

- As the afternoon ended, we were given a captivating presentation by **Dar Wong** – renowned expert in 5th Century **Sun Tzu's 'Art of War'** – and its application to modern day business practice.

'...He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks...'



Thursday 26th September Social Program

The social program began with a delicious buffet in the **Glen Bar** followed by an exuberant evening of **karaoke** hosted by **Roy Ng** which saw members of both networks taking part with gusto! The song choice was vast and became more obscure as the night progressed... Guests in the hotel beyond the walls of the Glen Bar were treated to power ballads from the likes of *Lady Gaga* and *Celine Dion*, and disco fever from well-known *Abba* and *Earth, Wind and Fire* classics. Not forgetting, of course, **'Tequila'**! Who knew we had such a musical bunch of lawyers? **Euro/Asia Vision was a huge success!**

Roy Ng then went on to referee the drinking competition **'boat race'** and it came as no surprise to us that the ALA and WLN mixed teams share more interests other than the law. At the end of this magical evening some of the group continued their revelries into the night and explored Bangkok's nightlife and glittering sky bars. Suffice to say this first day had successfully forged and engendered a wonderful team spirit and camaraderie amongst all present.



Friday 27th September World Business Forum

This significant networking occasion was seamlessly co-ordinated by the ALA team. There were **over 200 participants from more than 20 countries** and across business and legal sectors including ESG, tech, deep tech, de-carbonisation, finance, professional services, green industry, and renewable energy. It also welcomed delegates from the **Global Trade & Technology Council of India** and **Asean China Commerce Association**.

The forum featured a range of engaging discussions with panellists from businesses and government agencies and explored ways of navigating the global economic shifts and trends. It also highlighted Thailand as the key destination in South-East Asia for investment, particularly in the field of environmental sustainability.

His Excellency Chuan Leekpai, **former Prime Minister of Thailand**, attended the forum as the Guest of Honour and, in his keynote speech, he emphasized the importance of a strong rule of law in allowing businesses to prosper, particularly in times of rapid transformation.

A special thanks to **Jackie Wu** (Partner, Long A Law Firm) for her excellent presentation: **Legal Insights: "Building Sustainable Enterprises Across Borders"** as part of the **"Business under ESG Era"** panel discussion; and also to **Charis Papachristodoulou** (Partner, Papadopoulos, Lycourgos & Co) for sharing his expertise in the **"Technology and World Revolution"** panel discussion.

There was a large presence of Thai press at the forum, promoting the occasion to a wider business audience. WLN Directors **Carlo Gurioli** and **David Elvira Benito** were interviewed (captured below!).



Friday 27th September Social Program

The conference concluded with a dazzling gala dinner to celebrate the **10th Anniversary of ASEAN Legal Alliance**. 240 guests attended; including Guests of Honour: **Gen. Chetta Thanajaro** (Chairman, Asean-China Commerce Association) and **Phongthep Thepkanjana** (Former Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Minister, Education Minister and Energy Minister of Thailand).

We enjoyed sumptuous food and beautiful traditional Thai dance displays as well as the opportunity for networking between guests, business connections, and ALA and WLN delegates. A charity auction was organised, with proceeds going to the **Red Cross of Thailand, Rak Thai Foundation and the Thailand Women Lawyers Association**. Over one hundred thousand baht was raised!

The evening continued for many at one of Bangkok's spectacular sky bars where there was dancing, laughter, and singing under the stars (*quite literally!*).

Many thanks to **Aloysius Wee, Jessica Caddawan** and all those from the **ASEAN Legal Alliance** who were involved in the organisation of this spectacular anniversary celebration enjoyed by us all.



Saturday 28th September Social Program

We closed our conference with a city tour through Bangkok's vibrant **Chinatown** and a visit to the famous **Wat Po** to see the spectacular **Reclining Buddha**. Our afternoon was then free to relax by the pool and shopping. We raised a birthday toast to Aloysius (his secret was out!) – who had worked so tirelessly throughout the last few days and months to make this event a huge success. We bid farewell to one another with a resolute knowing that not only business connections but friendships had been forged across the globe and we all looked forward to meeting again soon.

Will you join us at our next conference?

We look forward to seeing you in...

MARBELLA!

Thursday 3rd – Saturday 5th April 2025

