

# AIAC x Ciarb ASEAN CONFERENCE

Monday, 14 April 2025  
9:30AM - 7:00PM  
Asian International Arbitration Centre  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## AIAC X CIARB MALAYSIA ASEAN CONFERENCE 2025

"REIMAGINING ASEAN ARBITRATION: CATALYSING THE FUTURE OF ADR AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION"

### DETAILED PROGRAMME

9.30 a.m.	Registration <i>Light refreshments, coffee, and tea will be served.</i>	
10:00 a.m.	Welcoming Remarks	Ms. Crystal Wong Wai Chin, Chair, Ciarb Malaysia; Partner, Lee Hishammuddin Allen & Gledhill
10:10 a.m.	Opening Remarks	YBhg. Datuk Almalena Sharmila Johan Chief Executive Officer, AIAC
10:20 a.m.	Special Remarks	YB Tuan M. Kulasegaran Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform)
10:30 a.m.	<b>Session 1: ASEAN Arbitration at a Turning Point – Disruption, Reform and the BRI Factors</b>  As ASEAN cements its position as a global economic powerhouse, its arbitration landscape is undergoing profound transformation. China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) has injected billions into infrastructure projects across the region, bringing both opportunities and disputes. Meanwhile, technological innovation, shifting investor-state dynamics, and the evolving regulatory landscape are reshaping the conduct of arbitration proceedings.  In this high-impact session, leading arbitration experts, policymakers and corporate counsel will tackle the most pressing issues surrounding ASEAN dispute resolution today. How will arbitration adapt to the surge in BRI-related disputes? Can ASEAN balance its flexible, consensus-driven approach with the demand for stronger enforcement mechanisms? Is regional cooperation enough to counter growing external influences?	<b>Panellists:</b>  1. Dr. Ong Kian Ming, Former Deputy Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry 2. Dato' Mary Lim Thiam Suan, Director, AIAC 3. Mr. Mahesh Rai, Ciarb Singapore, Director, Drew & Napier 4. Ms Lu Fei, Director, Business Development Division, CIETAC  <b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Crystal Wong Wai Chin, Chair, Ciarb Malaysia



This panel moves beyond theory to explore the realities on the ground, providing unparalleled insights into the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of arbitration in ASEAN.

*Join us as ASEAN arbitration navigates rising BRI disputes, enforcement challenges, and shift period.*

11:30 a.m.

### Coffee Break

11:45 a.m.

### Session 2: Foundations of Justice: Evolving Construction Arbitration in ASEAN

With construction disputes dominating arbitration in Malaysia and ASEAN's infrastructure boom accelerating, arbitration must keep pace with the increasingly complex, high-stakes disputes. Are the current processes efficient enough? Do we need specialised construction arbitrators? How should tribunals handle massive evidence, expert conflicts and cross-border complexities?

*Hear from respected arbitration figures—unfiltered, insightful and practical.*

#### Panellists:

1. Mr. Rajendra Navaratnam, Partner, Azman Davidson & Co
2. Mr. Foo Joon Liang, Partner, Gan Partnership
3. Mr. David Bateson, International Arbitrator, 39 Essex Chambers
4. Mr. Kamesam Shankar, Director, Shankar Chandran Advisory

#### Moderator:

Ms. Vatsala Ratnasabapathy, Senior Partner, Zain & Co

12:45 p.m.

### Luncheon

2:00 p.m.

### Session 3: The Art of Persuasion in ASEAN Arbitration – Winning Over Asian Tribunals

Persuading a tribunal is the cornerstone of successful advocacy—but what truly resonates with Asian arbitrators handling disputes in ASEAN jurisdictions? As arbitration in the region evolves, are we using the most effective techniques, or are we relying on outdated norms?

From a client's perspective, the ability to shape arguments, engage tribunals and present compelling written and oral submissions is critical. Over the years, established approaches have been refined, but are they still the best tools for today's arbitration landscape? Should we rethink how we advocate before tribunals in dealing with ASEAN disputes?

This frank and interactive session will challenge assumptions and explore fresh strategies for written advocacy, oral hearings and tribunal engagements—ensuring your case is not just heard, but truly persuasive.

*Join us for a no-nonsense, practical debate on what truly persuades tribunals in ASEAN arbitration—and what doesn't.*

#### Panellists:

1. Mr Ng Jern-Fei KC, Duxton Hill Chambers
2. Ms. Heidi Chui, Partner, Stevenson, Wong & Co
3. Mr. Nahendran Navaratnam, Navaratnam Chambers

#### Moderator:

Ms. Heather Yee Jing Wah, Assistant Director, AIAC



3:00 p.m.

## Coffee Break

3:15 p.m.

### Session 4: Advancing Women in ASEAN Arbitration – Influence, Leadership and Change

Panellists:

As ASEAN solidifies its position as a global arbitration hub, the role of women practitioners has never been more pivotal. Yet, while progress is undeniable, challenges persist—from tribunal appointments to leadership representation. How can we accelerate meaningful change and ensure women in arbitration not only participate but lead?

This session brings together distinguished female arbitrators, counsel and in-house practitioners for a thought-provoking and solution-driven discussion on:

- **ASEAN's Evolving Landscape** – How women are shaping the future of arbitration in the region
- **Breaking Barriers** – Addressing challenges in leadership, visibility and career progression
- **Power in Connection** – The role of mentorship, networks and advocacy in advancing women practitioners
- **What's Next?** – Strategies to elevate female leadership in arbitration as the ASEAN's influence grows

*Join us in shaping the future of arbitration in ASEAN—where women don't just have a seat at the table, but a voice that leads.*

1. Ms. Sitpah Selvaratnam, Independent Arbitrator
2. Ms. Donna Ross, Independent Arbitrator
3. Ms. Shamala Devi Balasundaram, Partner, Chooi & Company
4. Ms. Karen Ng, Partner, Karen, Mak & Partners

Moderator:

Ms. Sneha Ravi Iyer, Senior International Case Counsel, AIAC



4:15 p.m.

## Coffee Break

4:30 p.m.

### Session 5: The Next Generation: Young Arbitrators and Practitioners Shaping the ASEAN's Arbitration Future

Panellists:

As ASEAN's arbitration landscape evolves, a new generation of dynamic arbitrators and practitioners is redefining advocacy, case strategy and tribunal management. How do young professionals break into this constantly evolving field, build credibility and navigate the challenges of securing appointments in a traditionally experience-driven industry? What innovative approaches are they bringing to dispute resolution?

This panel brings together rising stars in arbitration—emerging arbitrators, counsel and practitioners—who will share insights on:

- **Breaking In & Moving Up** – Strategies for career progression & gaining first appointments.

1. Ms. Serene Hiew, Partner, Harold & Lam Partnership
2. Mr. Tan Jun Hong, Duxton Hill Chambers
3. Mr. Lim Tse Wei, Senior Associate, Herbert Smith Freehills
4. Mr. Xing Chengdong, International Counsel, Rajah & Tann Asia
5. Mr. Ng You Xian, Associate, TS Oon and Partners

Moderator:

Ms. Aayushi Singh, Juriste



- **Advocacy & Influence** – How young practitioners can stand out before tribunals.
- **The Tech-Driven Arbitrator** – AI, legal tech and the digital shift in arbitration.
- **ASEAN's Unique Opportunities** – How regional trends are creating new spaces for young practitioners.

*The next chapter of arbitration is being written—be part of it.*



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5:30 p.m.

Reception hosted by 39 Essex Chambers

