



13TH
SINGAPORE DIALOGUE ON
**SUSTAINABLE
WORLD
RESOURCES**

 **SINGAPORE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

Resilient Commodities: Innovation and New Markets



Conference Highlights
7 May 2026

Executive Summary

The Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) convened the 13th Singapore Dialogue on Sustainable World Resources (SWR) on 7 May 2026 under the theme “*Resilient Commodities: Innovation and New Markets.*”

Held against a backdrop of geopolitical tensions, rising energy and shipping costs, and tightening sustainability regulations in key export markets, the Dialogue brought together over 230 policymakers, business leaders, investors, and experts to address the central question:

How can ASEAN’s commodity and agribusiness sectors remain competitive and sustainable in a disrupted global trade environment?

The Dialogue featured a keynote address by Ms. Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Republic of Singapore, and a keynote dialogue with H.E. Arif Havas Oegroseno, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, as well as two panel sessions and a dedicated dialogue on fire and haze risk.

Across the sessions, speakers converged on a shared theme: ASEAN’s commodity sector must evolve from a producer of resources into a resilient, sustainable, and value-adding contributor to regional and global supply chains.

For ASEAN:

- The region’s commodity sector faces simultaneous pressures from geopolitical disruption, sustainability regulation, and climate risk.
- The energy transition and increasing interest in bioenergy present new opportunities for agribusinesses to move up the value chain.
- Fire and haze risks are rising in 2026 due to the return of El Niño, requiring stronger regional preparedness.



Speakers Overview

Guest-of-Honour / Keynote Speakers

Ms. Grace Fu

Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Republic of Singapore

H.E. Arif Havas Oegroseno

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

Panel 1: New Markets for ASEAN Commodities

Mrs. Arada Fuangtong

Director General, Department of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Thailand

Mdm. Izzana Salleh

Secretary General, Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC)

Mr. Osamu Abe

Managing Director and Chief of Staff for Asia Pacific, MUFG Bank

Moderator:

Ms. Fang Eu-Lin

Partner and Sustainability & Climate Change Practice Head; PwC Asia Pacific Centre for Sustainability Excellence Leader, PwC Singapore; and Council Member, SIIA

Panel 2: Innovation, Risk, and Strategy for Bioenergy

Mr. Olivier Tichit

Director of Communications & Sustainability, Musim Mas

Mr. Hanzhe Liu

Deputy Department Head, Environmental Energy Business Department, Mitsubishi Corporation Singapore Branch

Mr. Daniel Ng

Senior Director (Air), Ministry of Transport, and Chief Sustainability Officer, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS)

Mr. Ernest Tan

Executive Director, Head of Consumer Goods & Healthcare, Group Wholesale Banking, Sector Solutions Group, UOB

Moderator:

Mr. Satya Ramamurthy

Chair, Public Sector, Structured Finance Asia Pacific, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC); and Council Member, SIIA

Dialogue: Fire and Haze in Southeast Asia – Risk and Readiness

Dr. Israr Albar

Senior Adviser for International Cooperation on Forest Fire Management, Ministry of Forestry, Republic of Indonesia

Mr. Craig Tribolet

Director of Sustainability and External Affairs, APRIL Group

Prof. Dr. Ir. Bambang Hero Saharjo

Professor, Faculty of Forestry and Environment, IPB University (Bogor Agricultural University)

Co-Moderators:

Mr. Simon Tay

Chairman, SIIA

Mr. Nirarta “Koni” Samadhi

Country Director, WRI Indonesia

Welcome Remarks

Singapore has a unique role in global supply chains for agricultural commodities and energy despite its lack of natural resources. As a hub for trade and finance, Singapore is deeply connected to these global flows and can play a part in helping make the global economy more sustainable.

In his welcome remarks, Mr. Simon Tay, Chairman, SIIA, said that when the SWR first began over a decade ago, sustainability was far less prominent in international conversations and policy discussions. Since then, sustainability has risen in importance.

Singapore has placed sustainability at the centre of its national strategies. “As a small country, sustainability is a necessity and requires regional and global cooperation for survival and growth,” Mr. Tay said, emphasising that platforms like the SWR are important in bringing together diverse perspectives to address shared challenges.

Mr. Tay highlighted that sustainability is now a necessity for survival and resilience, not just for environmental reasons. He called for closer collaboration among governments, businesses, and communities to build resilient systems for energy, food, and resource production in the face of future shocks.



“When the next shock hits — on our markets, our energy systems, or from climate change — will we be ready to adapt, or will we be forced to react?”

Mr. Simon Tay

Chairman, Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)

Keynote Address: Sustainability in a Disrupted World



“Prioritising climate adaptation and sustainable land use practices will support productive yields, compounding over time, nurturing more rewarding jobs and stable income, and stabilising food prices for people in the region.”

Ms. Grace Fu

Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Republic of Singapore

Southeast Asia is facing a “perfect storm”, according to Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Republic of Singapore.

Delivering the keynote address at the 13th SWR, she said the disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions are coming together with the effects of climate change. Developments in the Middle East have contributed to higher energy prices, supply chain disruptions, and concerns over food security, while climate-related risks continue to intensify.

Minister Fu noted that Southeast Asia has experienced increasingly frequent extreme weather events, including floods, landslides, and prolonged periods of dangerous heat. She also highlighted forecasts of a warmer-than-usual dry season and the possibility of a strong El Niño later this year, which could increase the risk of droughts, land and forest fires, and transboundary haze across the region.

Against this backdrop, Minister Fu emphasised that sustainability remains critical to enabling long-term resilience and growth. “As we brace for volatile times, we should ‘not let a good crisis go to waste’ and seize opportunities to enhance our resilience,” she said.

She outlined three ways in which sustainability can strengthen resilience: by enhancing supply chain security, supporting economic stability, and helping countries adapt to the growing impacts of climate change. Sustainable production practices can reduce dependence on volatile energy and input markets, while helping businesses maintain access to markets, capital, and investment opportunities.

Minister Fu also highlighted the importance of climate adaptation and sustainable land use in safeguarding the region's agricultural sector.

At the same time, she cautioned against emerging risks such as “green protectionism”, where trade barriers erected along with sustainability standards could end up stifling trade, leaving people worse off. She stressed the importance of regional cooperation to strengthen food security, supply chain resilience, and climate action.

“Some of the challenges we face in the months ahead and foresee in the years to come will feed into Singapore's ASEAN Chairmanship next year. We see this as a sustained, collective endeavour to build momentum and enhance resilience,” she said.

Keynote Dialogue: Reinventing “Sustainable” in Commodities



“Sustainability today is no longer only about environmental protection. It is also about market access, financial flows, and development pathways. If implemented equitably, it can strengthen cooperation.”

H.E. Arif Havas Oegroseno

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

Environmental protection, economic development, and social justice must be pursued together. It is important that sustainability standards be designed and implemented in ways that are both effective and equitable, said H.E. Arif Havas Oegroseno, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, in a keynote dialogue at the 13th SWR.

Vice Minister Havas echoed the concern raised by Minister Fu that green requirements could become trade barriers.

Unfortunately, current sustainability standards and regulations are often unevenly applied across commodities and jurisdictions, increasing compliance costs and creating challenges for producers in the Global South. The impacts are potentially greater on smallholder farmers, who play a critical role in global agricultural supply chains but often face greater difficulties meeting increasingly complex sustainability requirements.

As an example, he cited the European Union's Regulation on Deforestation-free Products, popularly known as the EU deforestation regulation (EUDR), which is taking effect for large to medium companies on 30 December 2026, and will be similarly mandatory for small and micro enterprises from 30 June 2027.

“The issue, therefore, is not sustainability ambition. It is consistency, proportionality, and fairness in implementation,” he said. “A balanced approach supports economic and social sustainability alongside environmental goals.”

Sustainability frameworks must remain inclusive and practical, supporting development objectives, while strengthening cooperation between producers, governments, and international markets.

Four Priorities from a Global South Perspective:

- **Inclusion by Design:** Smallholders must be part of the system, not excluded from it
- **System Level Alignment:** Sustainability must integrate trade, finance, and production realities
- **Mutual Respect of Standards:** National systems must be accepted as legitimate pathways
- **Fair Distribution of Costs:** The burden of transition must be shared across the value chain

Panel 1: New Markets for ASEAN Commodities

ASEAN's agricultural commodity industry must adapt to a shifting global landscape of sustainability regulations, changes in trade flows, and new market opportunities. The panel on "New Markets for ASEAN Commodities" at the 13th SWR discussed how producers are diversifying beyond traditional markets, boosting South-South trade, and strengthening domestic consumption.

Mrs. Arada Fuangtong, Director General, Department of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Thailand, said ASEAN countries need to work together to strengthen food security and supply chain resilience amid current global disruptions. ASEAN producers must evolve beyond traditional production of commodities to become a strategic pillar of food security, sustainability, and resilient global supply chains. For example, Thailand is positioning itself not just as an agricultural exporter but as a trusted strategic partner for global buyers.

Mrs. Arada called for stronger regional cooperation in ASEAN through better supply chain connectivity, customs and digital systems, and harmonised standards. At the same time, the region must ensure that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can benefit from this transformation.

"Sustainability is not a compliance burden; it is a competitive advantage. But the standards are complex, compliance costs are high, and SMEs are disproportionately affected. We need to make standards more practical and interoperable, reduce duplication, and promote mutual recognition across ASEAN."



“Amidst geopolitical shifts, technological game-changers and stricter sustainability standards, ASEAN's agricultural sector faces a defining moment. This is our opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation.”

Mrs. Arada Fuangtong

Director General, Department of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Thailand

Mdm. Izzana Salleh, Secretary General, Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), said that from CPOPC's perspective, building a resilient trade model takes priority over simply finding new markets.

The goal is not to replace one dependency with another, but to build a more balanced market architecture through diversification of destinations, products, and partnerships. Sustainability frameworks must be fair, science-based, practical, and implementable on the ground, particularly for smallholders most affected by fragmented or unfair rules.

With consumption of biofuels on the rise, environmentalists and market analysts have raised concerns about whether the world's land use sectors can meet the demand for both food and fuel. Vegetable oil industries like palm oil are at the centre of this debate. Mdm. Izzana said: "It's not food or fuel, but food and fuel. It is not binary. It is about allocation: each country has to look at its own baseline, infrastructure readiness, financial ecosystem and people readiness, and decide how to allocate resources so its people can survive and thrive."



“Palm oil is not just another export commodity; it sits at the intersection of trade, food security, energy security, industrial development and sustainability regulation... making it a strategic test case for ASEAN commodities.”

Mdm. Izzana Salleh

Secretary General, Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC)

Mr. Osamu Abe, Managing Director and Chief of Staff for Asia Pacific, MUFG Bank, said that the sustainability transition is not optional. Sustainability must be a mandatory part of ASEAN and Asia's continued growth trajectory. He said that ASEAN can position itself as a credible diversification opportunity and long-term growth region amid current disruptions to capital and commodity flows.

For finance to support this transition at scale, sustainability must be embedded into investment decisions through regulatory clarity, regional consistency, blended finance, and realistic pathways that reflect Asia's economic and development realities. Mr. Abe called for the formulation of regional sustainability goals that are realistic and fit the maturity levels of Asian markets, in order to "allow the true transition on the ground to take place."



“The capital market can play a role in supporting sustainability, but we need to bridge the Asian reality with the global narrative.”

Mr. Osamu Abe

Managing Director and Chief of Staff for Asia Pacific, MUFG Bank

Ms. Fang Eu-Lin, Partner and Sustainability and Climate Change Practice Head, and PwC Asia Pacific Centre for Sustainability Excellence Leader, PwC Singapore, and Council Member, SIIA said that transition cannot be treated as a simple compliance exercise, or a sharp divide between “green” and “brown”. Framing and summing up the discussion as the panel's moderator, Ms. Fang said the ASEAN region needs a pragmatic and just transition, one that recognises asymmetries and builds cooperation across governments, businesses, and financiers.



“We need to think about things maybe not in green or brown, but olive in color... pragmatic, but yet keeping an eye on the goal of what is sustainable.”

Ms. Fang Eu-Lin

Partner and Sustainability and Climate Change Practice Head, and PwC Asia Pacific Centre for Sustainability Excellence Leader, PwC Singapore, and Council Member, SIIA

Key Highlights from Panel 1:

- ASEAN must shift from traditional commodity supplier to strategic partner in global food security and resilient supply chains
- Sustainability standards must be practical, interoperable, and sensitive to the needs of SMEs and smallholders
- Finance can support the transition at scale only where there is regulatory clarity, regional consistency, and realistic pathways

Panel 2: Innovation, Risk, and Strategy for Bioenergy

Global interest in bioenergy has been rising over the past few years, as a pathway towards decarbonisation and net zero goals. The panel on “Innovation, Risk, and Strategy for Bioenergy” at the 13th SWR explored how commodity businesses are playing a role in bioenergy production, how supply chains are developing, and the current bottlenecks in scaling up bioenergy projects.

Mr. Olivier Tichit, Director of Communications and Sustainability, Musim Mas, said that palm oil should be recognised as a future-oriented sector with strong potential in renewable energy and rural development. The industry already operates on circular energy principles through combined heat and power (CHP) systems, where waste and residual biomass is used to generate steam and electricity for mill operations.



“Steam has been used by the palm oil industry for very long time... to generate that steam, what do we use? We do not use coal. We do not use oil. We do not use wood. We use the fibre of the oil palm plants. So we are circular already.”

Mr. Olivier Tichit

Director of Communications & Sustainability, Musim Mas

Aside from burning waste on-site to generate electricity, palm oil mills can also capture biogas and biomethane released by waste and process it as a replacement for natural gas. Biogas can then be used by existing gas-fired power plants. However, at present, biogas has not yet been widely taken up. Mr. Tichit said there are still technical and market barriers that need to be addressed. Policies, regulations, and incentives are needed to scale up biogas capture from palm oil mill effluent (POME).

In addition to electricity generation, the palm oil industry is also supplying the ASEAN region's biofuels industries, providing both waste and residuals as well as crude palm oil (CPO) as feedstock. Mr. Tichit said ASEAN should explore regional mechanisms to support the use and sale of biofuels.

Mr. Hanzhe Liu, Deputy Department Head, Environmental Energy Business Department, Mitsubishi Corporation Singapore Branch, outlined Mitsubishi's current strategic approach to alternative fuels.

From the perspective of technological maturity and affordability, Mitsubishi sees biofuels as a more viable short-term alternative to fossil fuels compared to hydrogen. Green hydrogen is still a promising fuel in the long term, but hydrogen production remains expensive and the infrastructure is still being built.

In comparison, biofuels are already a “drop-in” replacement fuel that can be used in existing vehicles and machinery. This is why Mitsubishi is building supply chains including SAF for aviation, biomethanol for maritime fuel, and bioethanol as a petrol substitute. Mr. Liu clarified that Mitsubishi is pursuing both bioenergy and hydrogen development in parallel. There is no single “silver bullet” solution for decarbonisation and Mitsubishi is developing multiple options.



“There is no single so-called ‘silver bullet’ solution for decarbonisation or for sustainability.”

Mr. Hanzhe Liu

Deputy Department Head, Environmental Energy Business Department, Mitsubishi Corporation Singapore Branch

The need for alternative fuels is especially evident in the aviation sector. Electrification is feasible for ground transport, but electric airplanes are not commercially viable based on current technology. Air transport requires a much higher energy density than current batteries can provide.

Mr. Daniel Ng, Senior Director (Air), Ministry of Transport, and Chief Sustainability Officer, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) explained that with present-day battery technology, an electric aircraft can carry at most 100 passengers. However, the average flight departing from Changi Airport already carries some 200 passengers. SAF is therefore currently the only available option for the aviation sector to meet its emissions reduction and net zero commitments, as a drop-in fuel that can be used in existing aircraft.

Singapore will introduce an SAF levy on all departing flights from Changi starting October 2026, with passengers paying a fixed flat fee of S\$1 to S\$41.60 per passenger depending on the destination and ticket type, funding SAF procurement through the newly established Singapore Sustainable Aviation Fuel Company (SAFCo). Mr. Ng added that Singapore is working with ASEAN partners on a regional SAF roadmap, with the goal of making ASEAN more resilient and self-sufficient in aviation fuel over the next 10 to 15 years.



“It’s very clear the only solution for aviation to decarbonise and to reach our commitment to net zero by 2050 is to use sustainable aviation fuel.”

Mr. Daniel Ng
Senior Director (Air), Ministry of Transport, and Chief Sustainability Officer, CAAS

Mr. Ernest Tan, Executive Director, Head of Consumer Goods and Healthcare, Group Wholesale Banking, Sector Solutions Group, UOB, highlighted the important role of financial institutions in supporting the energy transition. UOB is actively supporting clients in developing bioenergy projects, for example in classifying waste-to-energy initiatives as green finance and offering preferential interest rates.

However, Mr. Tan said there is still a lack of large-scale commercially viable projects, making it difficult to attract substantial investment into bioenergy. Projects need to be scaled up in order to unlock the broader capital flows that the nascent bioenergy sector needs.



“From the bioenergy sector, we do see various sparks of innovation, various sorts of opportunities where we can finance. But at the moment, we are not really seeing a scalable project that has come to the fore.”

Mr. Ernest Tan
Executive Director, Head of Consumer Goods & Healthcare, UOB

Summing up the discussion, the panel’s moderator, Mr. Satya Ramamurthy, Chair, Public Sector, Structured Finance Asia Pacific, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC), and Council Member, SIIA, said that the disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has resulted in an even greater interest in bioenergy, as the world seeks to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels.

In energy security discussions, the concept of an “energy trilemma” is used to frame conflicting priorities and trade-offs, namely the need to balance energy security with economic affordability and environmental sustainability. In today’s increasingly complex world, Mr. Ramamurthy suggested that energy discussions now also need to take global trade flows and agricultural land use into account, adding to the complexities faced by policymakers. Regional cooperation among ASEAN countries is therefore needed to untangle these challenges.



“In the energy world, they call it a trilemma. In this bioenergy world, I think we should call it the pentalemma, [balancing] trade, food security, energy security, industrial development, and sustainability.”

Mr. Satya Ramamurthy

Chair, Public Sector, Structured Finance Asia Pacific, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC), and Council Member, SIIA

Key Highlights from Panel 2:

- SAF is the most viable near-term solution for aviation decarbonisation; Singapore’s SAF levy and SAFCo are concrete steps toward regional supply
- Bioenergy presents significant opportunity, but scaling commercially viable projects remains the key barrier to unlocking capital
- A portfolio approach to biofuels spanning SAF, biomethane, biomethanol, and bioethanol is needed to balance emissions reduction, economic viability, and energy security

Dialogue: Fire and Haze in Southeast Asia – Risk and Readiness

Southeast Asia is entering a period of heightened fire and haze risk in 2026, with the return of El Niño bringing drier conditions. There is the possibility of a strong El Niño event, which media commentators are informally calling a “Godzilla” El Niño. Meteorologists have also warned that El Niño could coincide with the “positive” phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), a similar weather phenomenon that also brings hotter conditions and less rainfall, further increasing fire risk.

A special dialogue session at the 13th SWR examined the heightened fire risk in 2026, how the region is preparing for the dry season, and what can be done to strengthen fire and land management while also supporting the long-term productivity of ASEAN’s agricultural commodity and food systems.



“Indonesia has experienced, this year, more than 11,000 hotspots throughout Indonesia, 65 per cent of [them] on concessions. So this is something that then prompts questions of governance.”

Mr. Nirarta “Koni” Samadhi

Country Director, WRI Indonesia

Even prior to the start of the annual dry season proper, which usually runs between June to September, Mr. Nirarta “Koni” Samadhi, Country Director, WRI Indonesia warned that there has already been a rise in the number of hotspots detected by satellites in 2026 compared to the same period in 2025, with many of these hotspots falling within commercial concessions granted by the Indonesian government to companies. Mr. Koni was one of two co-moderators for the dialogue, chairing the session alongside Mr. Simon Tay, Chairman, SIIA.

Prof. Bambang Hero Saharjo, Professor, Faculty of Forestry and Environment, IPB University, said there is a historical tendency to be complacent about El Niño warnings. The last time there was a strong El Niño was in 2023, but this was only technically a strong event. In practice the effect of El Niño was muted that year.

Aside from 2023, the last two times the world has seen a strong El Niño coinciding with a “positive” IOD were 1997-1998 and 2015. In both cases, Prof. Bambang said that in the months leading up to the dry season, policymakers and experts spent time debating how serious the dry season would be. In the end, both periods saw severe fires and haze in ASEAN. Prof. Bambang stressed that fire preparedness must not be conditional on forecasts. A certain degree of monitoring, prevention, and firefighting capabilities must be maintained every year regardless of expected conditions.



“Is there El Niño or no El Niño? We fight the fires, we don’t care about that. [Do we] wait for El Niño to fight fires? I don’t think so.”

Prof. Dr. Ir. Bambang Hero Saharjo
Professor, Faculty of Forestry and Environment, IPB University

Dr. Israr Albar, Senior Adviser for International Cooperation on Forest Fire Management, Ministry of Forestry, Republic of Indonesia, noted that lessons have been learnt from the severe fires and haze in 2015. Since 2015, Indonesia has strengthened its fire management, including the use of area monitoring, air surveillance, fire prevention patrols, community firefighting programmes, and weather modification such as cloud seeding. Law enforcement has stepped in to investigate and charge perpetrators when burning has occurred.

Dr. Israr said the ASEAN grouping has also come together to address the haze issue, building on the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP). The agreement calls for the establishment of an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control (ACC THPC) in Jakarta. The centre is not yet fully operational, but it was inaugurated in April 2026, and ASEAN is working with member countries to finalise the documents needed for its establishment. The new centre will strengthen policy coordination on haze mitigation and land management, complementing the scientific data and satellite-based early warning provided by the existing ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre (ASMC) in Singapore.



“We hope this centre will be operational soon, so the centre can [support] the coordination and cooperation among the ASEAN member states and related stakeholders to address the haze issue.”

Dr. Israr Albar
Senior Adviser for International Cooperation on Forest Fire Management, Ministry of Forestry, Republic of Indonesia

In addition to measures at the government level, efforts by the private sector are also important in keeping the haze under control. Mr. Craig Tribolet, Director of Sustainability and External Affairs, APRIL Group, stressed the importance of strict fire management within company concessions. Mr. Tribolet noted that under Indonesian law, companies bear strict liability for any fires on their land, even if the fires started outside their boundaries and spread into their areas.

Mr. Tribolet pointed out that fire management must be a sustained, long-term investment, and fire management efforts must include engagement with local communities. Farmers use fire to clear land for planting and dispose of agricultural waste because it is effective and cheap, compared to the much more expensive option of hiring digging machinery to do the same tasks.

Mr. Tribolet said APRIL’s Fire Free Village Program (FFVP), which provides incentives to villagers to reduce or avoid burning, alongside support for sustainable agriculture, has reduced burning by 90 per cent over the last 10 years. “Engaging with communities, the key protagonist in this conversation, in a respectful way, is a critical way forward,” he said.



“That’s why we spend so much time and effort in engaging local communities in fire prevention... it has been, by far, the best investment we have ever made in fire management.”

Mr. Craig Tribolet

Director of Sustainability and External Affairs, APRIL Group

Conclusion: Building Resilience Through Innovation and Cooperation

Speakers at the 13th Singapore Dialogue on Sustainable World Resources observed that ASEAN’s commodity and agribusiness sectors stand at a pivotal moment, against a backdrop of geopolitical disruption, tightening sustainability regulations that may affect global trade, and rising environmental risks. Policymakers, companies, and smallholder farmer communities must work together to ensure that the green transition is not only sustainable, but also equitable, while building resilience against future shocks.

Sustainability and competitiveness are not mutually exclusive goals, they can be mutually reinforcing. ASEAN producers that embrace sustainability as a strategic priority will be better positioned to access capital, maintain market access, and build durable supply chains.

In a volatile world, ASEAN’s market leadership will be measured not by export volume alone, but by the resilience and sustainability of what the region produces and how it trades.

Cross-Cutting Insights

1. Sustainability as Competitive Advantage

Sustainability is no longer a compliance burden but a driver of market access, investor confidence, and long-term competitiveness. ASEAN producers that embed sustainability into their business models will be better positioned in global supply chains.

2. Bioenergy as a Value-Chain Opportunity

Converting agricultural waste and residuals into energy through biogas, biomethane, and SAF represents a major opportunity for ASEAN’s commodity sector to move up the value chain and contribute to regional decarbonisation goals.

3. Fair and Practical Sustainability Standards

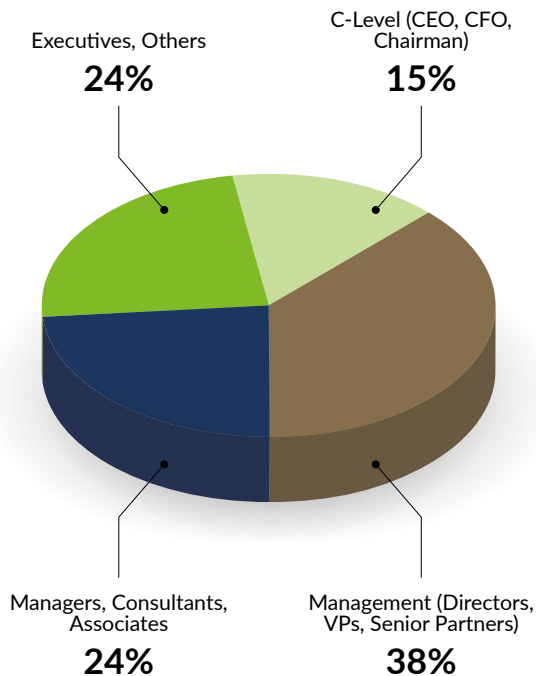
Sustainability frameworks must be science-based, equitable, and sensitive to the development realities of the Global South, particularly for smallholders who bear disproportionate compliance costs under regulations such as the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

4. Heightened Fire and Haze Risk in 2026

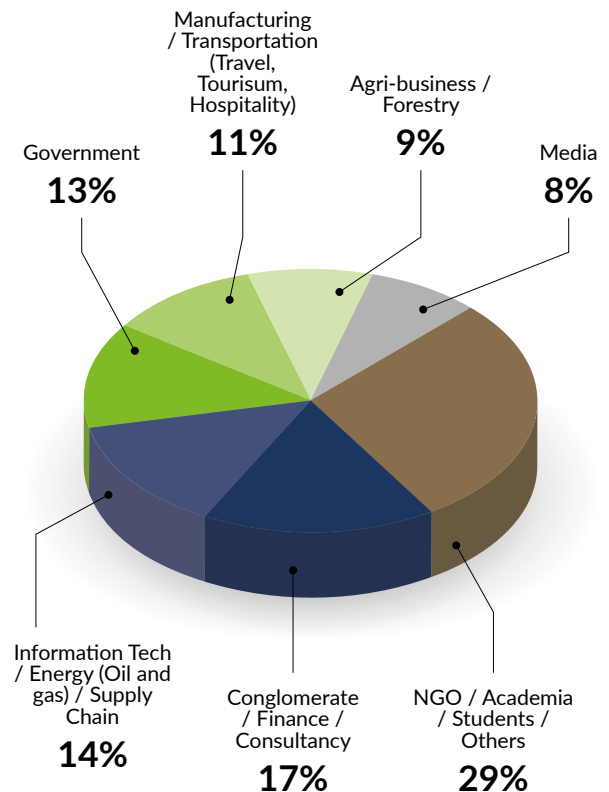
The return of El Niño conditions in 2026 significantly raises fire and haze risk across Southeast Asia. Regional cooperation, early warning systems, and community-level prevention remain critical.

Participants and Media

Profile of Participants



Participants by Sector



Note: Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The 13th SWR achieved a total of 17 mentions across Singapore and regional media outlets, including Lianhe Zaobao, The Straits Times, Bernama, CNA, Phoenix Satellite TV, South China Morning Post (SCMP), and The Star. Media coverage drew attention to Singapore Minister Grace Fu's remarks on the growing risks posed by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and a potential "Godzilla" El Niño cycle, with several outlets highlighting concerns over haze, food security, and regional resilience in Southeast Asia. Coverage also featured Indonesian Vice Minister Arif Havas Oegroseno's message on Indonesia's commitment to sustainable palm oil production and the energy transition, including innovative uses of palm oil waste.

Selected Articles:

- [Singapore Commits To ASEAN Environment Agenda Amid Geopolitical, Climate Challenges](#), Bernama, 7 May 2025
- [Extreme weather events, Middle East conflict create 'perfect storm' for Southeast Asia: Grace Fu](#), CNA, 7 May 2025
- [S-E Asia should brace itself for haze later this year as 'Godzilla El Nino' is forecast: Grace Fu](#), The Straits Times, 7 May 2025
- [South-East Asia should brace itself for haze later this year as 'Godzilla El Nino' is forecast: Singapore minister](#), The Star, 7 May 2025
- [Southeast Asia warned of 'Godzilla El Nino' whiplash threatening drought, floods, haze](#), SCMP, 7 May 2025

About the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA)

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Established in 1962, the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA) is a non-profit and independent think tank committed to producing policy analysis, fostering in-depth dialogues and bridging gaps between policymakers, private sector decision-makers and experts to shape public policy and social responses. Centred around ASEAN-focused themes, the institute aims to deliver policy analysis in international affairs and on issues driving environmental sustainability. As a founding member of the ASEAN-ISIS network since 1988, we engage in “Track II” diplomacy, fostering dialogue among stakeholders in our region and beyond.

About the Singapore Dialogue on Sustainable World Resources (SWR)

The SWR is the SIIA’s flagship dialogue on agribusiness, forestry, and sustainability, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, and experts to address the region’s most pressing commodity and environmental challenges.

About SIIA’s Sustainability Programme

Our Sustainability Programme began in 1997 when we organised Singapore’s first haze dialogue with the Singapore Environment Council on the critical haze problem. The programme has evolved to address a broader range of sustainability issues, including agribusiness and forestry supply chains as well as the leveraging of green finance to advance ASEAN’s climate action and carbon neutrality goals.



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