



## CTFAS Seminar on

### ASEAN Economic Integration and progress in FTAs with its Trading Partner

The entry into force of the ASEAN Charter on 15 December 2008 marked a significant milestone in the history of ASEAN. It signifies the coming of age of ASEAN as a regional inter-governmental body which is rules-based and has a legal personality of its own.

The ASEAN Charter is also an important catalyst to bring ASEAN to its next level of integration towards ASEAN Community by 2015 which comprises 3 pillars- ASEAN Political- Security Community (APSC), **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)** and ASEAN Social- Cultural Community (ASCC).

A key characteristic of an ASEAN Economic Community is a single market and production base with free flow of goods, services and investment. Significant progress has been made in this area. Tariff liberalization is very close to the full realization of establishing ASEAN Free Trade Area. Average tariff was down to 1.95% in 2008, from 4.43% in 2000 according to ASEAN statistic. In addition to efforts in tariff reduction, tremendous efforts have been placed on removing non-tariff barriers to trade and enhancing trade facilitation such as simplification of custom procedures and harmonization of technical regulations, to further boost intra and extra ASEAN Trade. The development and implementation of the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive can serve as a good example in term of harmonization of technical regulation, paving a way for free circulation of cosmetics within the region.

ASEAN at the same time has committed to long term plans for Free Trade Areas (FTAs) with China, Japan and India. ASEAN signed a framework agreement for economic cooperation with China at the ASEAN Summit which would result in the creation of a FTA by 2010. Under the accord, tariff negotiations are to be completed by 2004 and implementation would commence by 2005. An "early harvest" package to liberalize trade, mainly in agricultural products, will be implemented by 1 January 2004 to show commitment to the accord and to bring early benefits. With Japan, ASEAN signed a declaration on a comprehensive economic partnership which contains elements for an FTA in 10 years' time. India also offered ASEAN an FTA with the sub-continent that could take shape in 10 years. US has also announced the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative which provides for FTA negotiation with ASEAN Countries during the APEC Summit held in Los Cabos.

The FTAs are expected to have a positive impact on the region as summed up by former Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong who compared the flurry of FTAs to that of an airplane that would help the region to take off on a new economic flight path. When the FTAs

are implemented in a decade or more, the region would witness the making of the first Asian FTA with ASEAN being the driving force. An economy worth USD 8 trillion would be created representing a quarter of world's gross domestic product and about 40 per cent of its reserves. This would rival ASEAN's major trading partners such as the EU and provide Asia with the bargaining power in multilateral economic fora.

### **Why is CTFAS Seminar so useful?**

Knowing that many cosmetic companies in Singapore are expanding or having intention to extend their business to many countries within ASEAN and outside ASEAN such as China, India, US, Korea and Japan etc and knowing how important and critical it is for companies to have appropriate information to proceed with business planning, CTFAS is pleased to organize a Seminar with the aim:

1. To provide participants with the most updated progress on the ASEAN Economic Integration and its FTA negotiations with trading partners;
2. To share with participants its potential implications on the cosmetic industry associated with FTAs;
3. To equip participants with the latest status of regulation harmonization in ASEAN on cosmetic sector and its future plan to respond to on-going FTA negotiations;

### **Who should attend?**

1. Chief Executive Officer or Business Development Officers;
2. Finance Officers;
3. Regulatory Affairs Officers;

### **Who are the speakers?**

Ms Shirley Ramesh is Senior Officer Trade Facilitation ASEAN Secretariat; Shirley is managing, among others, the Cosmetic Sector. She represents the ASEAN Secretariat in all ASEAN discussions on Technical Barriers to Trade, including harmonization of regulations. She is also involved in FTA negotiations between ASEAN and trading partners;

Mrs. Anis Talib is Director BPFK, the Malaysian Regulatory Body; she is also Chair of the ASEAN Cosmetic Scientific Body (ACSB) and incoming Chair of the ASEAN Cosmetic Committee (ACC). Mrs. Talib was among the key drivers in establishing and facilitating the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive and its implementation;

### **Where and When?**

The Seminar will be held on **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009** at the Four Seasons Hotel from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Please fill the registration form;