



PARAMI ROUNDTABLE GROUP

Presented by *U Tin Cho*
Senior Advisor, Parami Energy Group of Companies
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Background

- The Parami Roundtable Group is a think tank solely supported by Parami Energy Group of Companies to promote better understanding among all Myanmar people of what ASEAN membership means. The primary focus is on the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The Group has been successfully operating since early 2012. It is the only think tank in the country which looks at ASEAN issues.
- Parami Energy is a privately held Myanmar energy company headed by U Pyi Wa Tun who has also supported other Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities such as reforestation in Kayin state and support for basic education through promotion of traditional monastic education. Parami Energy has been publicly recognized for its long standing support for CSR work while U Pyi Wa Tun was designated a 'Young Global Leader' by the World Economic Forum in 2014 for his many achievements.



Three Major Objectives

- The Parami Roundtable Group has three major objectives:
- Wide provision of unbiased, research based knowledge and information on ASEAN and the AEC, to the general public. A key task is making both opportunities and challenges of integration clearer to the private sector which is the ultimate engine of growth
- Serving as a bridge between different groups which have a clear interest in ASEAN integration yet for various reasons communicate little with each other e.g. government, private sector, academia
- Promotion of the practice of respectful discussion and dialogue among the general public and particularly the younger generation which will live and work in an increasingly integrated Southeast Asia



Principles

- The Parami Roundtable Group operates according to the following principles:
 - It uses the Myanmar language exclusively to disseminate knowledge. This entails more work since all key information on ASEAN is in English but it greatly promotes outreach in a 50 million plus population country where most people do not have the English language skills needed to understand technical issues.
 - Major efforts are continuously made to ensure outreach to underserved groups or areas e.g. smaller towns, youth groups.
 - It is a non profit, non ideological group which works with all parties interested in ASEAN issues regardless of political affiliation or religious beliefs.
 - It uses all forms of multimedia to disseminate knowledge and continuously explores new methods in order to reach the entire community effectively.
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Activities, Achievements and Outputs

The Parami Roundtable Group has two major types of outputs:

- Knowledge and information
- Dissemination of above knowledge



Knowledge and information

- Knowledge on ASEAN is internally generated mostly by the core team through regular monitoring of publicly available information as well discussion with regional and national experts and research. The knowledge is disseminated through an 'AEC Perspective' policy brief as well as a data base. In all cases the information is presented with an eye to relevance for Myanmar readers.



Dissemination of knowledge

- **AEC Workshops:** We have held 18 workshops since 2012. Each workshop is led by the core team as well as volunteer resource persons. In addition the Workshops include the participation of high level local government dignitaries and the private sector. Roughly half of the Workshops have been in smaller towns which are typically ignored.
- **Television:** Since 2013, core team members of the Parami Roundtable Group have regularly appeared on prime time TV shows, individually or as a group, to discuss the implications of the AEC and greater connectivity in Southeast Asia. Feedback and findings of the different workshops are provided to senior public officials as well as posted on the website.
- **Website:** The Group's website in the Myanmar language has proved to be a highly effective means of dissemination as well as a way of encouraging discussion. Web visitor cumulative hits have increased from 78,000 at the end of 2014 to approximately 300,000 in March 2016. An average of 500 hits is made every day.



Dissemination of knowledge

- **Radio** is still a very important means of communication in Myanmar. After a tentative start on Padamyar FM, the Group launched in mid 2015 a ten part series on Mandalay FM which discussed a wide variety of ASEAN/ Myanmar related issues . The broadcasts were posted on the web site (a first in Myanmar) as well as made into a CD which has been freely distributed.
- **Other meetings:** The Roundtable Group has been invited by different groups to give presentations on ASEAN. These include presentations to the Christian Centre, youth at Buddhist monastery at Bago, Concord Institute, the NLD training center and the University of Economics. In addition the Group organized a well visited booth during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the University of Economics in late 2014.



Recognition by ASEAN

- In September 2015 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advertised in the newspaper calling for proposals for ASEAN People's Award.
- Parami Round Table Group entered the competition.
- There were 8 competitors out of which the Parami Round Table Group was selected and nominated by the focal Ministries who are responsible for implementing AEC in Myanmar.
- ASEAN secretariat approved and awarded the Parami Round Table Group with the ASEAN People's Award, the first ever has the ASEAN awarded.
- The Award was given away at the 27th ASEAN summit at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 22 November 2015.



CEO of Parami Energy Group receiving ASEAN Peoples' Award at 27th ASEAN Summit at KL, Malaysia



The Trophy of ASEAN Peoples' Award





Future Activities

- Scale up ongoing activities
- Start new activities e.g. podcasting on ASEAN issues
- Address new issues e.g. ASEAN Plus, plus activities
- Present focused and highly technical workshops which will enable Myanmar entrepreneurs to take much better advantage of even existing ASEAN preferences e.g. use of 'Form D'
- Link up with like-minded think tanks in other ASEAN countries



Thank You