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NUS' Centre for International Law Breaks New Ground with First Online Searchable Database of ASEAN Documents

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NUS' Centre for International Law (CIL) officially launched a first-of-its-kind searchable database of ASEAN and International Law documents endorsed by the ASEAN Secretariat on 18 March 2010 at the Maxwell Chambers.

ASEAN's Deputy Secretary-General for Community and Corporate Affairs, His Excellency Bagas Hapsoro, came specially from Jakarta to speak at the launch which was graced by various other dignitaries, including Attorney-General Professor Walter Woon, Chairman of the ASEAN Law Association Justice Lee Seiu Kin, Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, NUS Deputy President (Administration) Mr Joseph Mullinix, and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Known as the CIL Documents Database, this new online platform contains more than 320 ASEAN and International Law documents selected based on their importance to international law policies for the ASEAN region. The ASEAN documents collection contains over 200 intergovernmental instruments concluded by Member States with each other or with external parties. An example is the 2007 ASEAN Charter, which outlines the regional grouping's goal of becoming a rules-based organization.

"Having agreements such as the ASEAN Charter on the Database, free of any charge and easily downloadable, means everyone will now have effortless access to ASEAN Law. This will contribute to improved policy-making in ASEAN capitals and enhance research on ASEAN integration among scholars. Before you can study and implement agreements, you must first be able to find them," said CIL Director Assoc Prof Robert C Beckman.

Believing as well that greater access to ASEAN and International Law documents is very crucial for ASEAN people to understand the role of ASEAN, His Excellency



DATABASE LAUNCH: ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General H.E. Bagas Hapsoro (left) speaking at the launch after welcome address by CIL Director Assoc Prof Robert C. Beckman (right)



HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATION: Ms Liu Gehuan showing launch participant how to use the CIL Documents Database

Bagas Hapsoro complimented, "The CIL Database is definitely yet another connectivity tool that will connect the people to ASEAN and ASEAN to the people. This will enable persons with access to the system to quickly and thoroughly parse through mountains of data to find the relevant documents."

In addition to ASEAN documents, the database also contains over 120 significant global instruments, which were included since many government officials and scholars in Southeast Asia did not have proper libraries or electronic resources. Further expansion of the Documents Database is expected in coming months as CIL works on Phase 2 of its development.

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