



CIL Presents  
**UNESCO CHAIR ON AI LAW & SUSTAINABILITY  
 ASEAN NETWORK SERIES**  
 Inaugural Public Lecture in Vietnam



# UNESCO CHAIR ASEAN LECTURE SERIES IN VIETNAM: AI GOVERNANCE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASEAN COUNTRIES



**Wednesday  
 May 20, 2026**



**9:00 - 11:00 AM**



**Room 703 – E1 Building,  
 144 Xuan Thuy Street,  
 Cau Giay Ward, Hanoi**



**DR. JON TRUBY**

UNESCO Chair on Artificial Intelligence Law & Sustainability at Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore

EVENT REPORT

## UNESCO Chair ASEAN Lecture Series in Vietnam

### AI Governance & Sustainable Development in ASEAN Countries

Hanoi, Vietnam | 20 May 2026 | Event Organisation Supported By: Faculty of International Law, VNU University of Law, Vietnam National University, Hanoi · ILA Committee on AI & Technology Law





Group photograph with faculty members, organisers, and participants (left) · Public lecture session in progress (right)

## SECTION 1

# Event Overview

This inaugural lecture examined how AI governance, emerging technologies, and international law are shaping sustainable development across ASEAN countries marking a landmark moment for regional scholarly engagement under the UNESCO Chair's Global AI for Peace & Sustainability Initiative. Attendance & Setting

More than **100 guests** attended this NUS Centre for International Law workshop in Hanoi. The event brought together faculty members, researchers, and students from leading Vietnamese institutions for the inaugural lecture in the UNESCO Chair ASEAN Lecture Series in Vietnam — a milestone in the Chair's regional outreach strategy.

### Keynote Speaker

**Dr Jon Truby**, UNESCO Chairholder on AI Law & Sustainability at the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore, delivered the keynote lecture as the first event in the series under the Global AI for Peace & Sustainability Initiative. The session explored how AI governance, sustainability, and international law are increasingly interconnected across ASEAN.

### Themes Covered

The lecture linked key themes to the Chair's ongoing research agenda, including:

- AI and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Digital decarbonisation and the environmental footprint of AI
- Regulation of high-risk AI systems
- AI climate impacts and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

### ASEAN Programme Introduction

The event also introduced the Chair's growing ASEAN-facing programme, including planned research visits, webinars, the Junior ASEAN Scholars Scheme, and continuing collaboration with UNESCO's global networks. The Hanoi event represents the first node in what is intended to become a sustained regional lecture and research series.



Commentary and Q&A session (left) · Participants engaged throughout the lecture (right)

## SECTION 2

# Programme at a Glance

A carefully curated two-hour programme brought together keynote scholarship, Vietnamese expert commentary, open dialogue, and a forward-looking introduction to the Chair's regional initiatives. Here is how the morning unfolded:

1

### 09:00 – 09:05 | Welcome & Introduction

Formal opening remarks to set the stage for the inaugural lecture.

2

### 09:05 – 10:05 | Keynote Lecture

Dr Jon Truby: *AI Governance and Sustainable Development in ASEAN Countries*

3

### 10:05 – 10:15 | Scholarly Commentary

Vietnamese scholars contextualise the lecture for local and regional audiences.

4

### 10:15 – 10:30 | Open Q&A

Faculty members and students engage in open floor discussion with the keynote speaker.

5

### 10:30 – 11:00 | Junior ASEAN Scholars Scheme

Information session on the UNESCO Chair's flagship capacity-building initiative at CIL, NUS.



*Dr Jon Truby delivering the keynote lecture at the Faculty of International Law, VNU University of Law, Hanoi*

SECTION 3

## Key Themes and Discussion Highlights

The lecture advanced five interconnected propositions that framed AI governance as a matter of international law and sustainable development, rather than a purely technical or domestic regulatory concern. Each theme generated substantive discussion among participants.

### AI Governance as a Sustainable Development Question

AI governance in ASEAN should be understood first and foremost as a sustainable development challenge. Framing it solely as technology regulation risks missing the broader distributional, environmental, and social dimensions that determine whether AI produces equitable and lasting benefit.

### AI's Potential Across Sectors — Conditional on Governance

AI can meaningfully support climate adaptation, public service delivery, agriculture, health, education, and clean energy transition across ASEAN. However, the realisation of these benefits is not automatic — it depends critically on sound, inclusive, and enforceable governance frameworks at national and regional levels.

### Governing the Environmental Footprint of AI

The energy, water, compute, and physical infrastructure demands of AI systems are substantial and growing. These environmental costs must be systematically measured, disclosed, and regulated. Digital decarbonisation — reducing the carbon impact of AI infrastructure — was identified as an urgent governance priority for ASEAN states.

### Complementary Governance Layers: UNESCO, UN, OECD, ASEAN

No single institution holds the full answer to responsible AI governance. UNESCO, the broader United Nations system, the OECD, and ASEAN's own mechanisms each offer complementary, non-duplicative layers of normative and operational guidance that together form an interoperable governance architecture.

### Rethinking AI Sovereignty

AI sovereignty should not be conflated with digital isolationism. Rather, it refers to a state's accountable capacity to exercise meaningful control over data, compute resources, technical standards, infrastructure, and remedial mechanisms — enabling genuine participation in the global AI ecosystem on equitable terms.



*Faculty and participants contributing to the discussion (left) · Audience intervention during the Q&A segment (right)*

#### SECTION 4

## Commentary, Q&A and Audience Engagement

### Scholarly Commentary

The commentary session was a defining feature of the programme. Vietnamese scholars offered substantive reflections that helped localise the lecture's arguments for the Vietnamese and broader ASEAN context. Commentators drew particular attention to the following themes:

- Public-sector AI implementation
- Data and digital infrastructure governance
- Climate considerations in Southeast Asia
- Human rights safeguards in AI deployment
- Regional cooperation among ASEAN member states

These perspectives enriched the discussion by grounding the Chair's international law and governance framework in on-the-ground institutional realities familiar to Vietnamese legal scholars and policymakers.

### Audience Q&A

Audience participation was active and intellectually engaged. Students and faculty members from the hosting and partner institutions raised a broad range of questions and observations, engaging closely with the discussion on:

- AI governance frameworks and regulatory design choices
- Sustainable AI infrastructure and digital decarbonisation
- The role of international law in AI accountability
- Digital sovereignty and data governance in ASEAN
- Pathways for Vietnam's engagement with global AI norm-setting processes

The quality of engagement reflected the depth of interest among Vietnam's emerging generation of international law scholars in AI governance as a field of study and policy practice.



*Commentary from Vietnamese scholars (left) · Closing presentation and token of appreciation (right)*

SECTION 5

## Junior ASEAN Scholars Scheme, Guests & Acknowledgements

### The Junior ASEAN Scholars Scheme

The closing segment of the event introduced the **UNESCO Chair Junior ASEAN Scholars Scheme at CIL**, National University of Singapore. This initiative is designed to welcome junior researchers from across ASEAN member states to the Centre for International Law for a structured **29-day research visit** connected to the intersection of AI law, sustainability, governance, and international law.

The scheme was presented as a long-term **capacity-building and network-building initiative** with the ambition of creating a durable and self-reinforcing ASEAN research community. Activities during the residency period include collaborative research, seminars, policy dialogues, and planning for future regional scholarly activities. The scheme is intended to identify and support the next generation of ASEAN legal scholars working at the intersection of technology, law, and sustainable development.

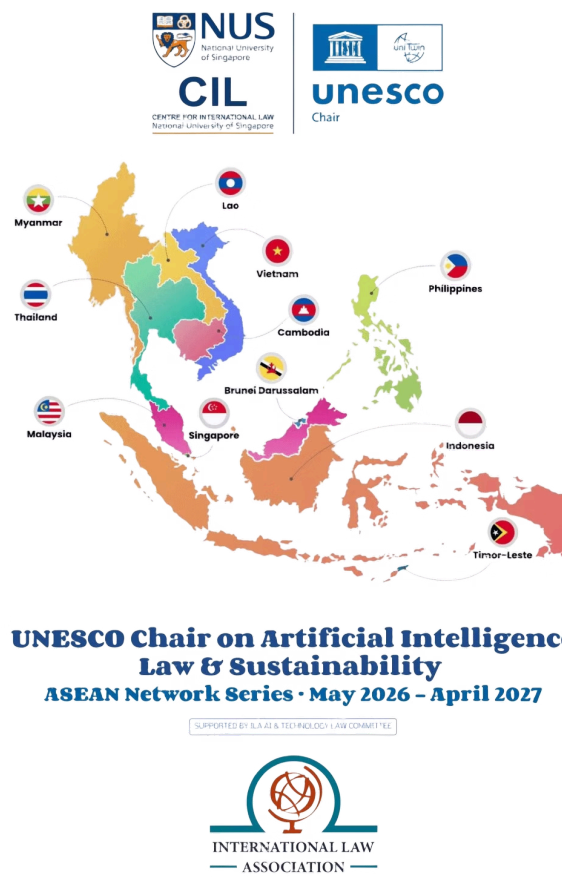
### Distinguished Guests

The event was attended by a distinguished group of faculty members and institutional leaders from Vietnam's leading law faculties. The UNESCO Chair extends sincere thanks to all participants, with special acknowledgement to:

- **Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Thi Xuan Son**, Dean, Faculty of International Law, VNU University of Law, Vietnam National University, Hanoi
- **Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Bich Thao**, Dean
- **Assoc. Prof. Phan Quoc Nguyen**
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr Le Thi Anh Dao**, Faculty of International Law, Hanoi Law University
- **Dr Trinh Hai Yen**, Vice Dean, Faculty of International Law, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam
- **Dr Do Giang Nam, Dr Do Viet Cuong, Dr Le Thi Anh Xuan, Dr Dao Trong Khoi** and **Dr Nguyen Thi Phuong Cham**

Special thanks are extended to **Duc Anh Nguyen**, event organiser and moderator, and **Sheikh Sultan Aadil Huque**, NUS Coordinator for the UNESCO Chair.

📄 Event report compiled and prepared by **Dr Jon Truby**, UNESCO Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on AI Law & Sustainability, Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore, and **Sheikh Sultan Aadil Huque**, Research Associate & Coordinator for UNESCO Chair on AI Law & Sustainability, Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore.



## For More Information

The UNESCO Chair on AI Law & Sustainability at the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore, welcomes enquiries from researchers, institutions, and policymakers across ASEAN and beyond. Connect with the Chair's work through the following channels:



### Main Website

Full details on the Chair's research agenda, events, publications, and the ASEAN Lecture Series are available at the Centre for International Law website.

[cil.nus.edu.sg/unesco-chair-on-ai-sustainability/](http://cil.nus.edu.sg/unesco-chair-on-ai-sustainability/)



### ASEAN Series Page

Access the dedicated ASEAN Networking Series page for event reports, upcoming lectures, and information on the Junior ASEAN Scholars Scheme.

[ASEAN Series Page](#)



### LinkedIn

Follow the UNESCO Chair on LinkedIn for news, updates, and engagement with the global AI governance and sustainability research community.

[Follow on LinkedIn](#)



### Instagram

Follow the UNESCO Chair on Instagram for event highlights, research updates, and engagement with the global AI governance community.

[Follow on Instagram](#)



### Address & Contact

469A Bukit Timah Road, Tower Block, #09-01, Singapore 259770

Contact: [aadil.huque@nus.edu.sg](mailto:aadil.huque@nus.edu.sg)

+65 6516 1227 (Telephone/Zoom)

- UNESCO Chair on AI Law & Sustainability** · Centre for International Law · National University of Singapore  
The Chair's mandate encompasses research, teaching, capacity-building, and international scholarly collaboration on the legal and governance dimensions of artificial intelligence, with a particular focus on sustainability and the ASEAN region.