

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear Members,

I'm midway through a 4-country trip in the ASEAN region, so let me share a few takeaways. Our August 18-20 Philippines Business Mission, which our Chief Country Representative Third Bagro and his team organized superbly, started strongly with our 35 member companies meeting President Marcos for 1.5 hours on day one. He set a forward-leaning tone that continued throughout the three days. Compared to two years ago, when I last led this business mission, my impression was that top government officials are more focused on working with USABC member companies and resolving difficulties in various sectors. One delegate wrote that the business mission was among her company's best advocacy experiences in the region.

In Jakarta, where I spent August 23-27 to prepare for our November 3-5 Indonesia Business Mission and connect with member companies, I was glad to join our Indonesia Chief Country Representative Nugraheni Utami and a dozen member companies in an August 24 discussion with the Chairman of Indonesia's National Economic Council, Luhut Pandjaitan, covering digital transformation and other issues. For our Indonesia team and member companies, this was the 45th meeting with GOI this year, an excellent example of detailed follow up after our business missions. Presidential Special Envoy for Climate and Energy Hashim Djojohadikusumo told us President Prabowo is likely to be in NYC for UNGA week, so we will aim for a member company event with him. I later had a chance to talk to a number of our member companies at a Indonesia Committee meeting hosted at Apple's Developer Institute in South Jakarta.

Next is our inaugural Singapore Business Forum on September 4, featuring Minister for Trade and Industry Tan See Leng, U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN Kevin Kim, renowned scholar/diplomat Kishore Mahbubani, and others, organized by Chief Country Representative James Andrade and his team. Hoping to see many of you there. After that, I'll join Emma Tabatabai, our Chief Country Representative in Malaysia, on our business mission to East Malaysia, September 7-10, energy and natural-resource focused.

**Best Regards,
Brian**

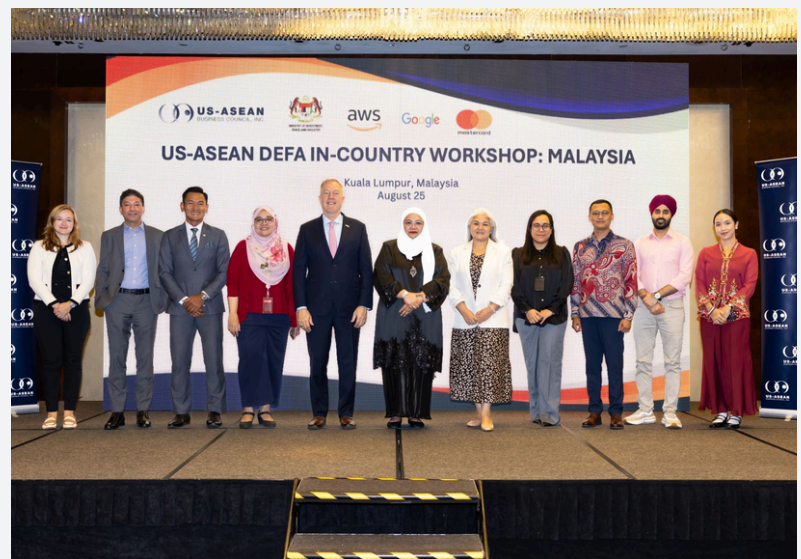


SPECIAL PROJECT
HIGHLIGHT**DEFA SPECIAL PROJECT 3.0**

Following the conclusion of DEFA negotiations at the 2025 ASEAN Leaders' Summit, USABC is launching DEFA Initiative 3.0 to guide the transition from policy negotiation to practical execution ahead of its 2027 implementation. Recognized by senior ASEAN officials for injecting key momentum into the framework, USABC's continued leadership is vital to addressing implementation gaps, technical readiness, and cross-border regulatory alignment. DEFA Initiative 3.0 will directly shape market access conditions, compliance costs, and digital trade opportunities across Southeast Asia through strategic regional consultation forums with ASEAN sectoral bodies (i.e., ACCED/ASEAN Coordinating Committee on E-Commerce and Digital Economy), targeted domestic stakeholder engagements in key priority markets, tailored capacity-building programs, and policy submissions to the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM).

For additional perspectives on DEFA and the future of digital multilateralism in ASEAN, check out our Vice President, Mario Masaya's, recent [article](#) in the World Economic Forum, "How ASEAN is testing the concept of digital multilateralism." The article explores how ASEAN can leverage digital cooperation to build a more connected, interoperable, and inclusive regional digital economy.

For further details regarding DEFA Initiative 3.0, please contact Angga Antagia (aantagia@usasean.org) and Bella Afifa (safifa@usasean.org).



AUGUST EVENTS

PHILIPPINES BUSINESS MISSION



PHILIPPINES BUSINESS MISSION OVERVIEW

USABC successfully concluded its 2026 Philippines Business Mission, bringing together 35 U.S. companies for high-level engagements with President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and key Philippine government leaders. Held in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of U.S.-Philippines diplomatic relations, the mission reaffirmed the U.S. private sector's commitment to supporting the Philippines' economic development, digital transformation, and regional leadership. Participating companies emphasized their long-term confidence in the Philippines and commitment to deepening U.S.-Philippines economic cooperation through investment, innovation, and sustainable growth.



LUZON ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISIT

On August 17, USABC facilitated engagements centered on the Luzon Economic Corridor (LEC) through a Roundtable Luncheon co-organized with FedEx and a series of site visits to Texas Instruments Clark and the FedEx Philippines Clark Gateway, giving delegates a firsthand look at U.S. investments driving advanced manufacturing and supply chain connectivity in the corridor. The luncheon featured keynote remarks from DTI Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque, welcoming remarks from Masamichi Ujii, USABC Board Member and President for North and South Pacific at FedEx, and insights from U.S. Embassy representatives on the LEC and the broader Pax Silica vision.



WELCOME RECEPTION

USABC's Philippines Business Mission delegation participated in a reception co-hosted by U.S. Ambassador Lee Lipton, with Executive Secretary Ralph G. Recto as Guest of Honor, convening over 150 senior government officials, business executives, and members of the diplomatic community. In his keynote remarks, Secretary Recto encouraged American companies to stay and expand in the Philippines, framing the next chapter of the U.S.-Philippines partnership as one built on shared investment. He also pointed to the Luzon Economic Corridor as the foundation for the next generation of the bilateral relationship.

AUGUST EVENTS

AMBASSADORS' TOUR



AMBASSADORS' TOUR OVERVIEW

From August 10 to 14, the Council hosted its annual ASEAN Ambassadors' Tour, which I was pleased to lead. During the tour, representatives from nine ASEAN Member States participated in a series of curated programs in Ohio, Minnesota, and California. These engagements provided the delegation with the opportunity to engage directly with thought leaders from the U.S. public and private sector on emerging investment opportunities, trends in health and digital innovation, outlook of global supply chains, and the importance of U.S.-Southeast Asian relations. The tour was made possible through the generous partnership of Atmo, Bitdeer, Solventum, 3M, Netflix, and Planet.

OHIO

In Canton, Ohio, Bitdeer hosted a series of engagements, including a site visit to Bitdeer's Massillon bitcoin mining facilities, a roundtable with the Ohio Blockchain Council at the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, and a luncheon to discuss Southeast Asia-Ohio investment partnerships and digital infrastructure developments. The luncheon convened local elected officials and economic development leaders—including Mayor of Massillon Jamie Slutz, Ohio State Representative Adam Holmes, and representatives from JobsOhio, the Ohio Manufacturers' Association, and TeamNEO.



MINNESOTA

In the Twin Cities area, Minnesota, the delegation toured member company facilities, including 3M's Innovation Center and Solventum's R&D facilities. During these site visits, the delegation discussed emerging trends in healthcare, health innovation, energy, supply chains, and manufacturing. The delegation also engaged with other members of the local business community.

CALIFORNIA

In Los Gatos, California, the delegation toured Netflix's headquarters and discussed Southeast Asia's creative economy and the growth of screen tourism, which marked the official launch of the Council's Entertainment Working Group. In San Francisco, California, the delegation's engagements focused on the transformative role that emerging technologies play in Southeast Asia. Planet hosted the delegation for a presentation, visit to the Planet Museum, and dinner and discussion on the role of satellite imagery in the region. The U.S. Department of Commerce then hosted the delegation at the National AI Center for a series of roundtables with local companies, featuring remarks from Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce Brandon Remington and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce Kelly Coldiron. The ASEAN Ambassadors' Tour concluded with a tour of Atmo's headquarters, featuring a discussion of AI-driven weather forecasting, and a dinner engagement with tech leaders and entrepreneurs.



AUGUST EVENTS

DISCUSSIONS & ROUNDTABLES



VIETNAM DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

On August 28, USABC and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce co-hosted a business roundtable in Washington, D.C. with H.E. Nguyen Van Thang, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, bringing together 70 senior representatives from leading U.S. companies and the Government of Vietnam. Members engaged directly with Deputy Prime Minister Thang and senior Vietnamese officials on investment opportunities, business priorities, and policy challenges, while receiving updates on Vietnam's economic reform, investment, and financial market development agenda. We were encouraged by the Government of Vietnam's continued commitment to engaging the business community and addressing bottlenecks to foreign investment. USABC is proud to serve as a trusted bridge between U.S. businesses and the Government of Vietnam as we work together to strengthen the bilateral economic partnership.



DISCUSSION WITH U.S. AMB TO ASEAN AND KL CDA

On August 4, USABC hosted U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN Kevin Kim at its office in Kuala Lumpur for a roundtable discussion during his visit to Malaysia. Ambassador Kim was joined by U.S. Embassy Kuala Lumpur's Chargé d'Affaires, David "Chip" Gamble, in engaging with USABC's Chief Country Representative for Malaysia, Emma Tabatabai, and USABC members across the technology, energy, financial services, advisory, consumer goods, and food and agriculture sectors. The discussion focused on supporting U.S. industry priorities through ASEAN mechanisms, across issues such as food security, platform governance, technology sovereignty, reciprocal trade, and regional economic integration. During the roundtable, Ambassador Kim highlighted the important role industry plays in underpinning the US's position in the region.



ROUNDTABLE WITH VIETNAM DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On August 20, USABC hosted a roundtable at our office with Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dang Hoang Giang, joined by USABC Special Advisor Barbara Weisel and private sector partners. The discussion covered US-Vietnam trade issues and the Vietnam Wartime Accounting Initiative (VWAI), which USABC has supported since last year. During the roundtable, participants heard Vietnamese leadership's perspective on trade issues and their priorities, while VWAI implementers and partners briefed the delegation on the impact of their contributions and on opportunities for future partnership. The Deputy Minister confirmed that accounting for Vietnam's 500,000 unlocated and unidentified war dead is among the highest priorities for General Secretary To Lam and encouraged further private sector support to the VWAI mission.

**UPCOMING
EVENTS & UPDATES****INAUGURAL US-ASEAN STRATEGIC BUSINESS FORUM****CONTACT:** slessing@usasean.org

USABC is organizing its inaugural Strategic Business Forum on Friday, **September 4, 2026** at the Singapore EDITION Hotel. The Forum, themed "Decoding Strategy in a Time of Global Realignment," will cover topics such as emerging technologies, energy transition, financial markets, talent & skills, and ASEAN geopolitics. USABC members can view the agenda and [register for delegate passes here](#) by selecting "USABC Member." Tickets for Corporate Members are US\$250. Chairman's Council members are eligible for up to 2 complimentary passes using discount code CHAIRMANS26. I hope to see many of you there. (Note: discount code is linked strictly to Chairman's Council email domains.)

**ROUNDTABLE WITH PROF. ARIF SATRIA,
THE CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION AGENCY (BRIN)****CONTACT:** mega@usasean.org.

On September 3, USABC will host a roundtable with Professor Arif Satria, the Chairman of National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), during his first official visit to Washington, D.C. The roundtable will provide a valuable opportunity to learn more about BRIN's agenda, the key takeaways of the Chairman's visit to the United States, as well as explore opportunities to strengthen U.S.-Indonesia collaboration.

**BUSINESS MISSION TO THE 58TH
ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS'
(AEM) MEETING****CONTACT:** saravadee@usasean.org

On September 20-22, USABC will lead a senior-level business mission to Manila alongside the 58th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting. The delegation will engage directly with ASEAN Economic Ministers, USTR, the ASEAN Secretariat, and ASEAN-BAC on advancing regional economic integration, competitiveness, digital connectivity, industrial resilience, and sustainable prosperity. The mission will also provide an opportunity for members to present private-sector recommendations and help shape ASEAN's economic agenda.

**COUNCIL IN THE NEWS**

- [How ASEAN is testing the concept of digital multilateralism](#) (Mario Masaya)
- [ASEAN still implementing parts of U.S. trade deals, business chief says](#) (Brian McFeeters)
- [Trump's war on tariff evasion could turn into a battle over global manufacturing](#) (Marc Mealy)
- [U.S. reaffirms support for Vietnam's search for fallen soldiers' remains](#) (USABCI)
- [PH woos U.S. firms for semiconductor, critical-mineral investments](#) (Philippines Business Mission)
- [The Last Mile of Digitalization](#) (Third)