US-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL, INC.

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear Members,

I write from Jakarta, where VP Mario Masaya and I, along with Citi President Batara, just finished leading our annual Indonesia Business Mission, featuring 20 high-level meetings and a dinner with Danantara CIO Pandu Sjahrir. The looming MSCI downgrade of Indonesia's market status is getting lots of media attention, but the conversations we had were about continuing and growing USABC members' solid investment and trade presence in ASEAN's largest market, whose annual growth is expected to be close to 5% this year.

As this newsletter details, our teams in the region and in DC are extremely active covering issues that matter for members: AI, cybersecurity, energy, financial issues, customs modernization, agribusiness, and more. We are also engaging with new U.S. ambassadors going to the region and new ministers and other senior officials in the region.

I have a request: we are sending out our annual member survey early this year, so that we can use responses to inform early-December Board of Directors discussions, and so that we get ahead of the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. I ask that you take a thoughtful 10-15 minutes to complete the survey, and if you have additional comments or suggestions on how we can do better, message me directly at bmcfeeters@usasean.org, or WhatsApp 1-202-836-0592.

Please find the survey here.

Best Regards,
Brian









OCTOBER
MISSIONS



Indonesia Business Mission and Economic Growth Recommendations

From October 27–29, USABC led its 2026 Indonesia Business Mission, bringing together senior representatives from 33 U.S. companies for 21 meetings with Indonesian government officials and stakeholders, , including Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Law Minister, Finance Minister, Transport Minister, Industry Minister, as well as Danantara CIO and CTO, among others. This year's mission was co-chaired with Indonesian Ambassador to the United States Indroyono Soesilo and coincides with the 77th US-Indonesia diplomatic relationship anniversary. . In contrast to last year, when senior GOI officials were pushing back against signing an Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) with the USG, this year Coordinating Minister Airlangga (the GOI's chief ART negotiator) indicated that Indonesia will implement the agreement after USTR concludes its 301 investigations and revises the ART basis. There were multiple references to Indonesia's possible market reclassification by MSCI (note that MSCI is not affiliated with USABC member company Morgan Stanley), with senior officials saying that economic growth and inward investment remain strong. Members praised the GOI for delaying the halal law's implementation for two years. Concluding the mission on October 29, USABC released a white paper outlining eight recommendations to support Indonesia's 8% economic growth target. The recommendations address import processes, standards and certification, digital technology adoption, regulatory predictability, investment facilitation, local capacity building, foreign exchange policy, and trade implementation, with the goal of strengthening Indonesia's investment climate and advancing sustainable economic growth. At a October 30 press briefing, our Indonesia team and I briefed a dozen media representatives on the business mission and the "8 for 8" report.

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Mission to World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings

On October 13–15, 2026, USABC led a delegation of 10 U.S. companies to the 2026 IMF–World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand, under the leadership of Mario Masaya, Vice President of Technology and Financial Services. The delegation engaged senior officials from the Thai Ministry of Finance, U.S. government agencies, and regional diplomatic missions to strengthen public-private partnerships, advance U.S. investment in Southeast Asia, and explore opportunities in AI, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, and efforts to combat scams and fraud. The delegation also participated in the U.S. Department of State's Strategic Dialogue on Deepening U.S. Foreign Assistance in ASEAN, reaffirming the U.S. private sector's commitment to regional economic growth, digital resilience, and inclusive innovation.



Mission to Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry

From October 28–30, USABC led a business mission to the 48th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) in Singapore, providing member companies opportunities to engage directly with ASEAN policymakers and advance U.S.-ASEAN cooperation in agriculture and food systems. The mission included participation in the AMAF Plenary Session and bilateral meetings with ASEAN delegations, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Discussions focused on sustainable agriculture, agri-tech innovation, animal health, food and nutrition, supply chain resilience, and reducing trade barriers, highlighting U.S. private-sector contributions to a more resilient and competitive regional agricultural sector.

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ROUNDTABLE ON ASEAN CYBERSECURITY AND RESILIENCE

On October 5, USABC hosted a roundtable on ASEAN's cybersecurity landscape, bringing together U.S. government officials, Singaporean diplomatic representatives, and private sector leaders to discuss emerging threats and opportunities. Led by President and CEO Brian McFeeters and Vice President Mario Masaya, the discussion highlighted the growing importance of cyber resilience and capacity building, particularly as AI amplifies both cyber threats and defensive capabilities.



ROUNDTABLE WITH INDONESIAN VICE FOREIGN MINISTER

On October 6, USABC hosted Indonesia's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arif Havas Oegroseno, for a roundtable with member companies in Washington, D.C., also attended by Indonesian Ambassador to the United States Indroyono Soesilo. The Vice Minister discussed the U.S.-Indonesia bilateral economic and security relationship following the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, alongside evolving developments in global energy security and supply chains.



U.S.-ASEAN WORKSHOP ON AI AND CYBERSECURITY STANDARDS

On October 7, USABC partnered with the U.S. Departments of Commerce and State and the U.S. Mission to ASEAN to convene a workshop on AI and cybersecurity standards at the ASEAN AI Summit for MSMEs in Manila. Moderated by USABC's Third Bagro, the discussion explored industry-led standards, secure digital infrastructure, cross-border data flows, and digital skills development.

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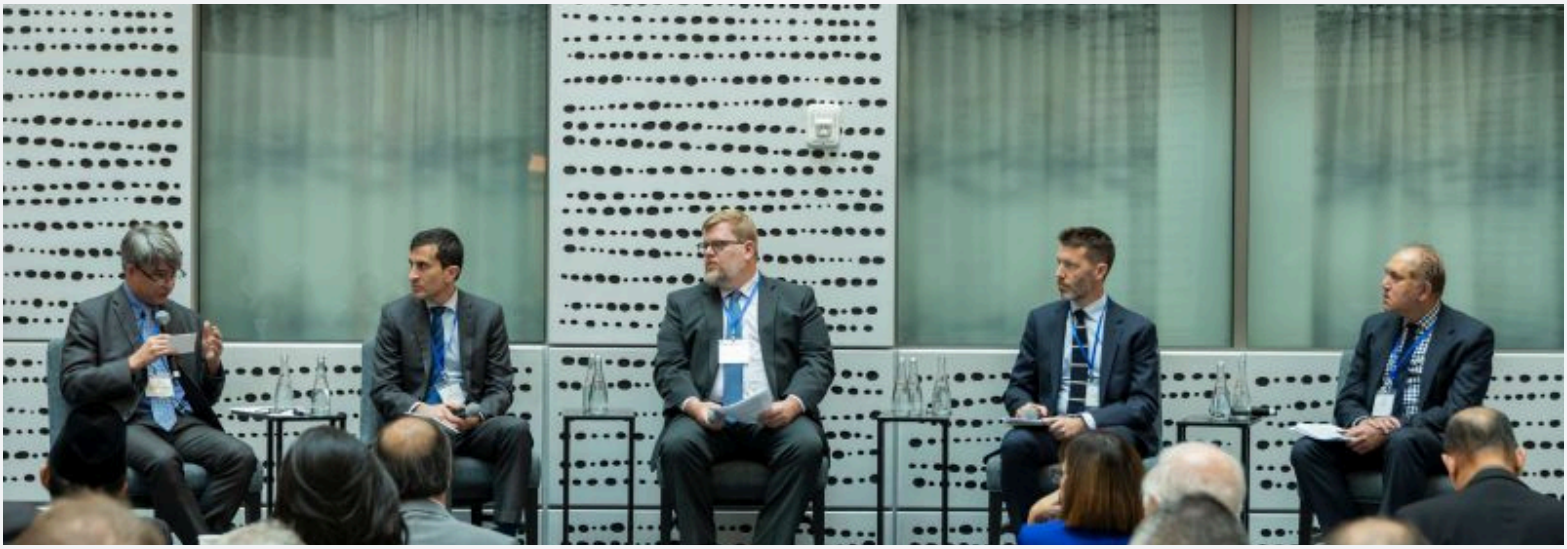
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USABC ADVANCES ASEAN CUSTOMS MODERNIZATION

On October 8, USABC participated in the ASEAN Customs Modernization and Trade Facilitation Roundtable at PASIA World 2026 in Manila. USABC's Third Bagro highlighted opportunities to streamline cross-border e-commerce shipments through risk-based customs procedures. Discussions emphasized digitalization, transparency, and harmonized processes to reduce business costs, facilitate legitimate trade, and strengthen ASEAN's regional competitiveness.



USABC HOSTS U.S.-INDONESIA DIGITAL TRADE AND AI FORUM

On October 13, USABC convened the U.S.-Indonesia Digital Trade and AI Cooperation Forum in Washington, D.C., bringing together senior U.S. and Indonesian government officials, industry leaders, and policy experts to strengthen bilateral cooperation. Discussions explored Indonesia's ambitions to become a regional hub for AI infrastructure and digital trade, emphasizing pro-innovation policies, trusted digital infrastructure, cross-border data flows, and regulatory alignment with international standards. The discussion highlighted Indonesia's potential for digital innovation, while participants examined opportunities to support local SMEs and develop balanced copyright policies that encourage innovation and investment.

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ASEAN ENERGY PRIORITIES WITH U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

On October 9, USABC hosted a Manila roundtable with U.S. Department of Energy Assistant Secretary Kaveh Farzad, Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Urbanas, and senior U.S. government officials on the sidelines of the ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting. Discussions explored opportunities to strengthen ASEAN's energy infrastructure, expand regional connectivity, and attract private investment, with a focus on geothermal energy, nuclear power, grid modernization, and cybersecurity. USABC's Third Bagro highlighted continued engagement on Philippine energy priorities, including the Luzon Economic Corridor.



USABC ADVANCES ASEAN CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND TRADE INITIATIVES

On October 7–8, As an official member of the independent advisory body to the ASEAN Focal Group on Circular Economy (FGCE), USABC participated in regional discussions in Bangkok to advance circular economy implementation and trade across ASEAN. USABC representatives Angga Antagia and Angelica Takashima contributed. USABC also joined an ASEAN Circular Economy Forum side event exploring how the upgraded ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) can reduce trade barriers and facilitate the movement of circular economy products.



USABC HIGHLIGHTS INCLUSIVE AGRIBUSINESS AT ASEAN SUMMIT

On October 9, USABC Country Representative for the Philippines Atty. Ma. Cecilia "Macel" Jimenez-Rada moderated a panel at the ASEAN Food Security and Agribusiness Summit 2026 in Manila. Organized by ABAC, the session explored private-sector and government partnerships with smallholder farmers to advance sustainable agriculture, strengthen food security, and build a more resilient and inclusive agribusiness sector across ASEAN.

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WELCOMING NEW THAI DEFENSE ATTACHÉ

On October 9, USABC welcomed Senior Colonel Yanyong Innanchai, Thai Defense and Military Attaché, in his new position. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives and discuss areas of potential collaboration.USABC looks forward to continuing its engagement with defense and military representatives across ASEAN to strengthen relationships and advance U.S.-ASEAN cooperation.



SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY WEEK

The Council partnered with the Singapore Energy Market Authority and the United States Department of Commerce for the "Spotlight U.S. Forum," which was held on October 28 as part of the Singapore International Energy Week. The forum focused on energy and data centers in Southeast Asia and was opened by US Ambassador to Singapore Amb. Anjani Sinha and Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Energy, Trade and Industry Minister of State Gan Siow Huang.

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USABC AND WIIT CONVENE PANEL ON AI GOVERNANCE IN ASEAN

On October 22, USABC and the Association of Women in International Trade (WIIT) co-hosted a panel discussion on AI governance in ASEAN, featuring experts from the Embassies of Singapore and Malaysia, ITIF, Cisco, and Mastercard. Panelists discussed ASEAN's growing focus on AI and the digital economy, efforts to build a trusted regional AI ecosystem, and approaches to balancing innovation with responsible governance, including data protection, digital trust, and online safety.



SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL CYBER WEEK

The Council, in collaboration with Cisco Systems, convened "Cyber for Breakfast: Emerging Technology & Threats – Risks & Opportunities for Building ASEAN's Cyber Resilience" on October 15 in Singapore, on the sidelines of Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) 2026. The engagement brought together senior ASEAN cybersecurity officials, U.S. Government representatives, and industry leaders to strengthen public-private dialogue on regional cybersecurity priorities. Discussions focused on addressing legacy and end-of-life technology, AI-enabled cyber threats, long-term cyber resilience, and post-quantum cryptography readiness. The session underscored the importance of sustained public-private collaboration in strengthening ASEAN's cybersecurity preparedness and safeguarding the region's critical digital infrastructure.

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ASEAN CULTURE DAY

On October 14, USABC and the USABC Institute sponsored ASEAN Culture Day 2026, hosted by the ASEAN Spouse Circle. USABCI President Maggie Hanson-Muse and I attended the opening ceremony, which celebrated the cultural heritage of all 11 ASEAN countries through traditional and contemporary fashion, textiles, and regional cuisine.



USABC CELEBRATES 2026 ASEAN-U.S. SCIENCE PRIZE FOR WOMEN WINNER

On October 14, USABC, the ASEAN Secretariat's Committee on Science, Technology, and Innovation (COSTI), UL Research Institutes, and UL Standards & Engagement announced the winners of the 2026 ASEAN-U.S. Science Prize for Women in Da Nang, Vietnam. This year's winners, Dr. Ha Thi Thanh Huong of Vietnam and Dr. Joanne Ngeow of Singapore, were honored for their AI-driven research on brain health and cancer prevention. USABC reaffirmed its commitment to supporting women in science and strengthening U.S.-ASEAN cooperation in research and healthcare.



USABC HOSTS U.S. AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO CAMBODIA

On October 16, USABC hosted a roundtable with U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia Christopher Anderson, bringing together member companies to discuss U.S.-Cambodia economic relations. Discussions focused on predictable tax and regulatory practices, supply chain resilience, regional economic cooperation, and opportunities to expand U.S. investment in Cambodia. USABC looks forward to working with Ambassador Anderson and the U.S. Embassy team to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties.

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BISA 2026 REPORT ROADSHOW TO SURABAYA

On October 20, 2026, USABC held a roadshow in Surabaya following the September launch of its Bisnis AS untuk Indonesia (BISA) Report 2026 in Jakarta. Under the theme "Innovation for East Java's Future," the event brought together government representatives, academics, students, businesses, and media to discuss how U.S. companies support East Java's economic competitiveness, talent development, innovation, and resilience.



USABC CO-ORGANIZES 7TH ASEAN SINGLE WINDOW SYMPOSIUM

On October 19, USABC, with support from Amazon Web Services and in partnership with the U.S. Mission to ASEAN and U.S.-ASEAN Partnership Program, co-organized the 7th ASEAN Single Window Symposium in Jakarta, Indonesia. The event brought together more than 150 government, technical, and business representatives to discuss electronic trade documents, customs efficiency, and findings from the 2026 ASW Users Survey. Participants including US Ambassador to ASEAN Kevin Kim and H.E. Savinder Singh, Deputy SecGen of the ASEAN Secretariat, highlighted opportunities for public-private collaboration and digital innovation to improve supply chain visibility, facilitate cross-border trade, and advance ASEAN economic integration.

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VIETNAM MINISTRY OF FINANCE ROUNDTABLE

On October 27 in Washington, D.C., the Council hosted a delegation from Vietnam's Ministry of Finance for an Industry Roundtable on proposed revisions to the Investment Law, a cornerstone of Vietnam's foreign investment framework. With the amended law currently under review by the National Assembly and expected to take effect in March 2027, together with an implementing decree, the discussion gave member companies a valuable opportunity to engage directly with the drafting team and gain insights into the government's clear shift toward prioritizing investment that supports Vietnam's strategic development goals.



SUBSEA CABLE POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES

On October 22, USABC hosted a roundtable in Singapore alongside the ASEAN Working Group on Submarine Cables, bringing together ASEAN government officials, industry representatives, and technical experts to discuss foundational infrastructure for a secure digital economy. Featuring presentations from Amazon Web Services and Meta, the discussion examined challenges related to subsea cable investment, regulatory coordination, permitting timelines, and repair capabilities, highlighting opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation and implement the Enhanced ASEAN Guidelines on Submarine Cables.



SINGAPORE HEALTH SCIENCES ROUNDTABLE

On October 22, the US-ASEAN Business Council hosted a discussion with Adjunct Professor (Dr.) Raymond Chua, CEO of Singapore's Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and Deputy Director-General of Health (Health Regulation) at Singapore's Ministry of Health (MOH). The exchange covered regulatory innovation, emerging health technologies, early regulatory engagement, and pathways to ASEAN's regulatory cooperation. Dr. Chua also provided updates on Singapore's evolving healthcare regulatory landscape and initiatives to support growth in the life sciences, biomedical, and medtech industries.

COMINGS AND GOINGS
UPDATES

HASYIM ALI SHAHAB



On October 21, Hasyim joined the Council's Jakarta office as Manager for Indonesia, replacing Rahma. His experience covers economic research, government, technology, and consulting, with most of his recent work centered on public policy, regulation, and business-government engagement.

Before joining the Council, Hasyim was a Consultant at Mandala Consulting, where he worked with multinational companies, investors, industry associations, and public-sector institutions on issues including fintech and financial services, import regulation, digital policy, and industrial development. He also led a research-based advocacy project for Indonesia's fintech association, working closely with regulators and banking executives on recommendations to support responsible partnerships between banks and fintech companies.

Hasyim graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Economics from Universitas Indonesia and attended the Data and Policy Summer Scholar program at the University of Chicago.

COMINGS AND GOINGS
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CHRISTINE WAN



The Council bid farewell on October 30 to Christine Wan, Senior Manager - Financial Services, Sustainability, Energy, following four years at our Singapore office. The Council will miss her energy and enthusiasm and wishes her the best.

ETHAN ROZARIO



The Council bid farewell on October 21 to Ethan Rozario, Associate - Malaysia, ICT, Travel & Tourism, after almost three years at the Council. We wish him the best in all future endeavors.

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BOTTOM LINE WITH USABC: A CONVERSATION WITH DFC

On October 28th, USABC Chief Policy Officer Marc Mealy sat down with U.S. International Development Finance Corporation's Chief Policy Officer Carolone Vik for a podcast discussion on the role of DFC in the Trump Administration and ways they are looking to partner with the U.S. private sector. Check it out on our YouTube here

THAILAND BUSINESS MISSION

CONTACT: Ploy (pimploy@usasean.org)

From November 3–5, USABC will lead its 2026 Thailand Business Mission in Bangkok, engaging the new Thai administration and bringing together senior executives to discuss policy priorities and opportunities to strengthen U.S.-Thailand economic ties. The mission will focus on expanding trade and investment, improving the business environment, and advancing cooperation in sustainability, digital innovation, energy, supply chain resilience, and human capital development. The delegation is also scheduled to meet with Thailand's Prime Minister on November 5.

ADS THAILAND WORKSHOP

CONTACT: Chuck Casey (ccasey@usasean.org)

On November 6, USABC will convene an Aerospace, Defense & Security (ADS) Workshop in Bangkok, bringing together U.S. companies and Thai government, military, and defense industry stakeholders to discuss Thailand's defense modernization priorities and explore opportunities for industrial partnerships, sustainment, and long-term U.S.-Thailand defense cooperation. The program will feature a keynote luncheon with a senior Thai defense leader, an interactive defense industry roundtable, and a networking reception to identify opportunities for future collaboration.

COUNCIL IN THE NEWS

- Indonesia, US Explore Digital Trade and AI Partnership
- USABC Notes US Company Innovation in East Java, from Agriculture to Clean Energy
- USABC issues eight measures to support RI's 8 percent economic growth
- Indonesia Ready to Proceed With US Trade Deal, Says USABC
- Minister invites USABC to boost transport investment in Indonesia

UPCOMING
EVENTS & UPDATES

ASEAN DEFENSE ATTACHÉS SPEAKER SERIES

CONTACT: Chris Zoromski (czoromski@usasean.org)

USABC will convene a closed-door roundtable with Rafael F. Leonardo, Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for South and Southeast Asia, in partnership with the Washington Area ASEAN Defense Attaché Association (WAADAA). The discussion will bring together ASEAN defense attachés and select U.S. industry representatives for an overview of U.S. defense priorities in the region and a candid Q&A. The roundtable will also support USABC's upcoming aerospace, defense, and security missions to Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines.

ASEAN SUMMIT AND ABIS

CONTACT: Angga Antagia (aantagia@usasean.org)

On November 15, 2026, the US-ASEAN Business Council, in partnership with the U.S. Mission to ASEAN and the ASEAN-U.S. Partnership Program (AUPP), will host a U.S.-ASEAN Connect Series Executive Luncheon titled "Digital Economy and AI: Powering the Next Era of U.S.-ASEAN Economic Growth" alongside the ASEAN Business & Investment Summit (ABIS) 2026 in Manila. The luncheon will bring together senior ASEAN government officials, U.S. government representatives, business executives, technology innovators, and policymakers to explore how AI and digital technologies can drive regional growth and competitiveness. Featuring participation from senior U.S. government officials, including Deputy Under Secretary Bill Guidera and U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) head Tom Hardy, the program will examine trusted digital ecosystems, technology investment, digital infrastructure, talent development, and public-private collaboration ahead of the 50th anniversary of U.S.-ASEAN relations in 2027. The luncheon will provide USABC members with a valuable opportunity to engage directly with policymakers, exchange perspectives on emerging digital economy and AI initiatives, and explore opportunities to strengthen U.S.-ASEAN collaboration in these rapidly evolving sectors.