

Oxford, UK and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – 3 June 2014 – Project Southeast Asia and the Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI) are pleased to announce that the 4th Annual Southeast Asian Studies Symposium will be hosted by the JCI at Sunway University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Organised by Project Southeast Asia, and held at the University of Oxford for three successive years (2012 – 2014), the Southeast Asian Studies Symposium is the world's largest annual Southeast Asian Studies conference. Its core aim is to address the most important Southeast Asian issues, such as sustainable development, environmental change, and infectious diseases, and propose and develop solutions which are sustainable, effective, viable, and culturally appropriate.

In 2014, the Southeast Asian Studies Symposium was held at Keble College, Oxford from 21 – 23 March. It had 310 participants from 32 countries, who heard 166 papers in 36 panels. There were, as well, seven roundtables involving cabinet ministers, politicians, diplomats, NGOs, business leaders, and academics.

The 2014 Southeast Asian Studies Symposium's keynote speakers were:

- Senator Dato Seri Abdul Wahid bin Omar, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia; and former Maybank CEO;
- Stephen Lillie, Head of the Asia-Pacific Directorate of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office;
- Tony Pua, Democratic Action Party Member of Parliament for Petaling Jaya Utara, Malaysia; and
- Sir David Weatherall, Regius Professor of Medicine Emeritus, University of Oxford, and Patron, Project Southeast Asia.

Government representatives from six ASEAN countries attended, including the Ambassadors of Indonesia and Viet Nam, along with representatives of the UK, EU, and UN. The Symposium opened and closed with messages from two Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (1991) and Jose Ramos-Horta (1996).

Project Southeast Asia is an initiative by scholars of Southeast Asia at the University of Oxford. It seeks to promote transnational and interdisciplinary solutions to Southeast Asian issues. It wishes to apply Southeast Asian knowledge to find solutions for the world's problems and use global expertise to address Southeast Asian problems. This builds on Oxford's already numerous contributions to Southeast Asia and its unsurpassed track record of excellence in the region, particularly in the field of medicine, where it conducts pioneering research in nearly every Southeast Asian country.

The Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia (JCI) was officially launched in March 2014 to perform the role of a public policy think tank. Acting as a catalyst in promoting Southeast Asia studies, the JCI will serve as an attractive hub for studies on the region to help develop and upgrade academic standards of teaching and research in Sunway Education institutions and in the region. The JCI was established at Sunway University following a donation of USD6.2 million by the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation (JCF) to Harvard University in 2013 demonstrating the JCF's international commitment to the development of Southeast Asian studies. With the establishment of the Jeffrey Cheah Professorial chairs at Harvard, a world premier university, the JCF is now bringing this catalytic contribution to a global reach through its support for Oxford and Project Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asian Studies, an area which was previously overshadowed by focus on the region's two great neighbours, China and India, is gaining strong influence in the global economy, prompting heightened interest amongst the international business communities. Studies on Southeast Asia are expected to provide a greater understanding of the region and enhance better business and social relations.

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