



GFCE Southeast Asia Regional Meeting

Session – “Catalysing Cyber Synergy: Empowering Southeast Asia’s Digital Future ”

October 17th 2023

Narrative Report

The Southeast Asia Regional Meeting on October 17th, 2023, focused on Catalysing Cyber Synergy: Empowering Southeast Asia’s Digital Future. The regional meeting serves as an essential platform for ASEAN Member States and other stakeholders in the region to gather and discuss cyber capacity building needs and best practices.

This regional meeting focused on strengthening collaboration; identifying country-specific cyber priorities; fostering cyber expertise exchange; encouraging cyber capacity building; promoting regional cybersecurity cooperation; and facilitating digital transformation. The program included an introduction to the GFCE Southeast Asia Hub and Activities, Opportunities and Insights to Cyber Capacity Building for ASEAN, a panel discussion on Catalysing Cyber Synergy: Empowering Southeast Asia's Digital Future, and a small group roundtable discussion on the GC3B Accra call.

Based on these sessions, the following key takeaways were drawn:

- The identifications of significant gaps in readiness and awareness across various countries, underscoring the necessity for thorough assessments at the outset of cybersecurity endeavours.
- The importance of centralising priorities to make them accessible and adaptable to prevent duplication and efforts.
 - The GFCE Clearing House was mentioned as a tool to facilitate this process.
- Develop a curriculum related to cybersecurity for different ASEAN countries.
- Connect with the Ministries for Education and leverage international organisations to further enhance bilateral cooperation.
- Sectoral CERTs need to be promoted and operationalised.

Summary

The GFCE Southeast Asia Regional Meeting serves as an essential platform for ASEAN Member States (AMS) and other stakeholders in the region to gather and discuss cyber capacity building needs and best practices. In an era of increasing cyber threats and challenges, it is crucial to strengthen cyber resilience and foster collaboration in addressing common cybersecurity issues. By convening this meeting, the GFCE and its Southeast Asian Hub aim to facilitate knowledge sharing, exchange of experience, and identification of effective strategies that have been successfully implemented in the region.

Context

The Southeast Asia regional meeting at the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise convened key stakeholders and experts to address pressing cybersecurity challenges in the region. Hosted in Singapore, the event focused on “Catalyzing cyber synergy to empower Southeast Asia's digital future”. Christopher Painter, President of the GFCE Foundation, and Yum Shoen Yih, Head of Special Projects at CSA Singapore, opened the meeting, highlighting the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing in tackling cyber threats. The objectives of the meetings were as following:

- Strengthen collaboration;
- Identify country-specific cyber priorities;
- Foster cyber expertise exchange;
- Encourage cyber capacity building;
- Promote regional cybersecurity cooperation;
- Facilitate digital transformation.

Overview

Moderator

- Farlina Said, Senior Analyst, Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia

Speakers

- Christopher Painter – President, GFCE Foundation
- Yum Shoen Yik – Head of Special Projects, CSA Singapore
- Allan S Cabanlong – Regional Director, GFCE Southeast Asia Hub
- Augustinus Mohn – Senior Manager, KPMG Netherlands
- Benjamin Ang – Head, Cyber and Homeland Defence, Centre of Excellence for National Security, RSIS NTU, Singapore
- Phannarith Ou, Director, ICT Security, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Cambodia
- Angelo Trias, Project Manager, Cybercrime Directorate, INTERPOL
- Mel Migrino, Chairman and President, Women in Security Alliance Philippines, and; Regional Director for Southeast Asia Information Security and Regulatory Alliance, Gogolook
- Sadie Creese, Director, Global Cyber Security Capacity Centre (GCSCC) at the Oxford Martin School.

Presentation and Discussion

The program featured insightful presentations and panel discussions, including an introduction to the GFCE Southeast Asia Hub and its activities by Allan S. Cabanlong, Regional Director. Augustinus Mohn from KPMG Netherlands provided valuable insights into cyber capacity building opportunities for ASEAN. The panel discussion, moderated by Farlina Said, Senior Analyst at the Institute of Strategic

and International Studies Malaysia, brought together experts from various sectors to discuss strategies for empowering Southeast Asia's digital future. Key topics included cybersecurity education, public-private partnerships, and regional cooperation to effectively address cyber threats. The Small Group Roundtable Discussion focused on the following questions:

- Q1. Within these broad themes, what do you think are the most urgent priorities or capacity gaps in Southeast Asia? Are there other capacity building needs that sit outside these broad themes that should be reflected?
- Q2. What solutions are already available that could address these priorities (e.g., projects, trainings)? What other solutions are needed to address the priorities?
- Q3. What else should be included or considered for the Southeast Asia Cyber Capacity Building Agenda (e.g., principles, values, approaches)? What would be important for you?

Overall, the meeting served as a platform for ASEAN Member States and stakeholders to exchange experiences, identify priorities, and foster collaboration in cybersecurity. Participants emphasized the need for comprehensive cybersecurity assessments, public-private partnerships, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen cyber resilience across the region.

Key takeaways

Key takeaways from this section were the identifications of significant gaps in readiness and awareness across various countries, underscoring the necessity for thorough assessments at the outset of cybersecurity endeavours. The necessity to engage third-party organizations to conduct comprehensive assessments was highlighted as a way to accurately determine cybersecurity needs. Strengthening cyber resilience emerged as a critical enabler for development, with speakers stressing its pivotal role in confronting evolving cyber threats.

Moreover, the importance of centralizing priorities was emphasised, making them accessible and adaptable to prevent duplication of efforts. The GFCE Clearing House was proposed as a tool to facilitate this process.

Developing a curriculum related to cybersecurity for different ASEAN countries emerged as a top priority, highlighting the significance of education and capacity building. Additionally, supporting public-private partnerships (PPPs) is essential for developing sustainable solutions, acknowledging the collaborative efforts needed between the public and private sectors in enhancing cybersecurity.

Engagement with Ministries of Education and leveraging international organizations such as UNESCO and INTERPOL are vital for advancing cybersecurity initiatives. Lastly, promoting and operationalizing sectoral CERTs, like those in Ghana, is crucial for enhancing cyber resilience within specific industries and sectors.