

## Brief history of SEANES

The South East Asian Network of Ergonomics Societies (SEANES) is a coalition of human factors and ergonomics societies in South East Asia (SEA). It is a voluntary and nonprofit entity; to date with five societies as members. SEANES replaced the former South East Asian Ergonomics Society (SEAES) that was established in 1984 by four eminent ergonomists led by the late Prof. Alain Wisner (France). The founding team comprised Prof. Adnyana Manuaba (Indonesia), Prof. Kitti Nantranont (Thailand) and Dr. Kazutaka Kogi (Japan). The prime goal of SEAES was to develop and promote ergonomics in the Southeast Asian region comprising 10 countries. These countries make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN.

SEAES was a federated member of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA). However, SEAES membership fluctuated over the years, from 1984 to 1994. It became apparent that SEAES had problems in leadership and its future may be somewhat bleak. This led to the mushrooming of national ergonomics societies in ASEAN, with the establishment of the *Perhimpunan Ergonomie Indonesia* (PEI) and the Ergonomics Society of Singapore (ERGOSS). Newly formed societies included the Ergonomics Society of Thailand (EST) and the Ergonomics Society of the Philippines (ESP). Following global trends in society renaming, two societies changed their names by 2016 – ERGOSS to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Singapore (HFESS) and ESP to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Philippines (HFESPhil).

SEAES held its triennial meeting-cum-conference on a rotational basis at various locations: 1991 Bali-Denpasar (Indonesia), 1994 Bangkok (Thailand), 1997 Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), 2000 Singapore, 2003 Kuching (Malaysia), 2005 Bali-Denpasar (Indonesia), 2008 Bangkok (Thailand), 2010 Cebu (Philippines) and finally in 2012 Langkawi (Malaysia). The early history of SEAES prior to 1994 was not documented, therefore little is known about its past decade of activities.

In 1994, Prof. Halimahtun M. Khalid from Malaysia was appointed as the first female SEAES President. She served as SEAES representative in the IEA Council until 2012. Due to a change in the IEA policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, national ergonomics societies could become federated members of the IEA. This paved the way for Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore to be represented autonomously in the IEA. To exist alongside with the established societies, SEAES was transformed into a network of ergonomics societies in SEA. This decision was made at the SEAES General Meeting on 23 May 2005 in Bali, Indonesia. A task committee comprising three senior members was formed, chaired by Prof. Halimahtun Khalid as SEAES-IEA Representative. The remaining members were Dr. Kazutaka Kogi (Japan) who was a founding member of SEAES, and Prof Martin Helander, a Past President of the IEA. The Committee reported to the outgoing SEAES President, Ms. Sudthida Krungkrai Wong (2005-2008) of Thailand. SEAES was dissolved on October 22, 2008. This led to the birth of SEANES two years later during the First SEANES Conference in Cebu, Philippines on 13 December 2010. Dr. Andrew Imada, the IEA President, presided the inauguration of SEANES. A Second Conference and Bi-annual meeting was held July 9-12, 2012 on the island of Langkawi, Malaysia. It was jointly organized by SEANES and the newly formed, Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Malaysia (HFEM). The SEANES logo and Awards were introduced at this significant meet.



SEANES Awards are given to Human Factors Professionals and Ergonomists who have contributed immensely to the promotion and development of the discipline in SEA. The following were recipients of the awards.

- SEANES 2012, Malaysia  
Education: Prof. Adnyana Manuaba, Indonesia  
Development: Dr. Kazutaka Kogi, Japan
- SEANES 2014, Singapore  
Education: Prof Martin Helander, Singapore
- SEANES 2016, Indonesia  
Development: Ms Sudthida Krungkrai Wong, Thailand

Despite active growth of ergonomics in Malaysia, HFEM was only founded on 5 June 2010 by Dr. Halimahtun Khalid, who later became its first President (2010-2012). HFEM became the 49<sup>th</sup> federated member of the IEA on 26 August 2013.

SEANES provides the executive power for ergonomic matters in ASEAN. SEANES has three goals: The first goal focuses on regional collaboration. Besides the national Ergonomic societies, SEANES offers other forms of Ergonomics representation such as Special Interest Groups in the remaining five SEA countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam). This group has yet to form a society.

The second goal involves engagement and professional development in four sectors: Public, Academia, Government and Industry. Through this goal, SEANES organizes various activities that involves the participation of national agencies. This includes awareness seminars and training workshops.

The third goal concerns global development through extended cooperation with ASEAN partners such as Japan and Australia. SEANES supports the Journal of Human Ergology produced by the Human Ergology Society of Japan, which is an affiliate of the IEA. Dr. Kazutaka Kogi, a former Treasurer of the IEA and Past President of The International Commission of Occupational Health (ICOH), is prominent in promoting ergonomics in SEA and other developing countries. The Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia (HFESA) is also a staunch partner of SEANES by setting up funds to support young ergonomists in SEA attend the IEA Congresses.

The SEANES Council has seven members: President, Secretary, Treasurer and four ordinary country members. The appointment of the President is based on a rotational basis by country. The President represents SEANES in the IEA Council meetings. In addition, SEANES has 3 advisers: Dr. Halimahtun Khalid, Dr. Kazutaka Kogi and Prof. Martin Helander who guide in strategic planning. SEANES organizes the following activities in its member countries:

- (1) SEANES conference is to be held bi-annually in conjunction with the SEANES council meeting,
- (2) Development of SEANES Ergonomic Checkpoints for Indoor and Outdoor Workplaces,
- (3) Training and certification of SEANES ergonomists and human factors professionals in the region;
- (4) SEANES Ergonomics Month takes place annually between August to October in member countries.

The Symposium on “Future of Ergonomics in Southeast Asia” is a common feature at SEANES bi-annual conference, besides a special session on “ASEAN Ergonomics” at the triennial Congress of the IEA. The last session was held at the 19<sup>th</sup> Triennial Congress of the IEA in Melbourne, Australia from 9-14 August 2015 on the theme “SEANES Ergonomics Checkpoints.”

Beyond 2012, SEANES held two conferences, organized by the national ergonomics societies: 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference in Singapore, 1-4 December 2014, and the 4th Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, 28 November-1 December 2016. The 5<sup>th</sup> Conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, 12-14 December 2018. These events provided a platform for information exchange, knowledge sharing and networking among regional human factors professionals and ergonomists to further enhance the implementation and practice of the discipline in South East Asia.

Halimahtun M. Khalid, Ph.D., CHFP, FIEA  
Past President, SEANES