

14th National Convention on Statistics (NCS)
Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria, Quezon City
October 1-3, 2019

DATA DIPLOMACY WITHIN ASEAN COUNTRIES AND BEYOND

by

Joefer B. Santarita, Ph.D.

For additional information, please contact:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Author's name | Joefer B. Santarita, Ph.D. |
| Designation | Associate Professor |
| Affiliation | Asian Center, University of Philippines Diliman |
| Address | GT-Toyota Asian Cultural Center, Magsaysay Avenue cor. Katipunan Avenue, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1101 |
| Tel. no. | 981.8500 local 3580/3577/3578/3586 |
| E-mail | joefes@yahoo.com |

DATA DIPLOMACY WITHIN ASEAN COUNTRIES AND BEYOND

by

Joeje B. Santarita, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Data diplomacy is 'an emerging cross-disciplinary idea that addresses the role of diplomacy and negotiation in relation to data access and sharing, as well as the impact of data on diplomatic relationships among nations and organizations. In contemporary times, data is rapidly moving to the "premier league" of global diplomacy, alongside the more traditional issues of disarmament, health, trade, migration, and human rights. Thus, data becomes an important tool in advancing diplomacy in the field of consular affairs, strategic planning policy research, public diplomacy, development and humanitarian aid, international law among others.

This paper is coming from a social science perspective particularly from international relations. Hence, it will primarily use qualitative research method drawn from interview as well as from online and offline library research. It will examine the impact of data on diplomatic relations among the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as the latter's conduct of international cooperation and partnership beyond the region. In particular, it will closely highlight the role of ASEAN Statistics Division (ASEANstats) in the promotion of regional integration as well as active collaborations of ASEAN to its immediate and extended neighborhood.

I. Introduction

The sharing of information among polities, institutions and individuals in the late 20th century is believed to have been facilitated by several factors such as technological revolution particularly the presence of computers and internet as well as the conclusion of the Cold War in the 1990s. The latter has allowed the swift exchange of information among stakeholders without the fear if not reservation on the use of information as espionage mechanism. As a result, the conduct of bilateral and multilateral relations with extended and immediate neighbors has been more facilitating during the post 1990 era. In recent decades, as hardware becomes better and cheaper, and as open-source software and database search and analysis services become more widely available, the power of Big Data is also increasingly at the disposal of small enterprises and individuals.¹ This development has further transformed the data diplomacy (DD) a new facet of diplomacy in modern times.

In the academic parlance, 'data' in DD means big data. The latter refers to the enormous amount of data that, using sophisticated analytics techniques, can be mined for information in order to reveal patterns and spot trends and correlations. The most important features relevant to understanding data or Big Data are known as "the four Vs" (Volume², Velocity³, Variety⁴ and Veracity⁵).

¹ Zwitter, A. Big Data and International Relations. *Ethics & International Affairs* 29, no. 4 (December 2015): 377–89, doi:10.1017/S0892679415000362.

<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=10051460&fileId=S0892679415000362>

² Zwitter. Volume refers to data of massive amount that can be measured in petabytes [10^{15} bytes], exabytes [10^{18} bytes], and zetabytes [10^{21} bytes] are considered big data. In the very near future, data will even be measured in yottabytes [10^{24}], which equals 250 trillion Digital Video Disks.

Indeed the current ‘big data era’ does add new elements to the possibilities of data, such as the speed and volume at which it is generated, the cost-effectiveness of storing and analyzing new forms of data, and the possibilities of linking big data sources. As a result, the power of big data lies in the way in which it is able to identify patterns, new insights, and unforeseen relations between variables. It emphasizes correlation, rather than causation, which both provides opportunities and challenges for diplomacy.⁶ Big data indeed interacts with diplomacy in three ways. First, the data can be used as a tool to make diplomacy more efficient, effective and inclusive. Second, it provides a new topic on the diplomatic agenda and features in international negotiations in areas such as e-commerce among others. Third, it is a factor that changes the very environment in which diplomacy operates, potentially shifting geo-political and geo-economic positions.⁷

These interactions pave the way for the emergence of DD as ‘an emerging cross-disciplinary idea that addresses the role of diplomacy and negotiation in relation to data access and sharing, as well as the impact of data on diplomatic relationships among nations and organizations. Thus, data becomes an important tool in advancing diplomacy in the field of consular affairs, strategic planning policy research, public diplomacy, development and humanitarian aid, international law among others.

This paper examines the impact of data on diplomatic relations among the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as the latter’s conduct of international cooperation and partnership beyond the region. In particular, it closely highlights the role of ASEAN Statistics Division (ASEANstats) in the promotion of regional integration as well as active collaborations of ASEAN to its immediate and extended neighborhood.

This paper is coming from a social science perspective particularly from international relations. Hence, it primarily uses qualitative research method drawn from interview as well as from online and offline library research. In this study, however, the ‘data’ in data diplomacy focuses only on the role of statistics in the diplomatic relations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states with each other and with the ASEAN as institution as well as on the latter’s relations with immediate and extended neighbors beyond the region.

II. Data Diplomacy in ASEAN

Data diplomacy works within ASEAN through data collection, compilation, editing and analysis; metadata compilation and assessment. DD also facilitates the formulation of protocol for new data requests; harmonization of classifications, concepts, definitions and measurements; adopt internationally recognized methodologies; and quality and timeliness. The DD through the

³ Zwitter. Velocity refers to the speed of data creation and its collection now approaches real time. This not only concerns questions of bandwidth (megabyte and gigabyte upload and download capabilities) but also of implementing information- technology architecture solutions that can cope with data in near real-time.

⁴ Zwitter. Variety refers to data that existed in structured and unstructured forms and in different formats and units of analysis, including as documents, emails, social media messages, YouTube videos, pictures, audio, radio-frequency identification (RFID) chips, satellite imagery, sky cartography, DNA sequencing, phone-network call data, and cell phone GPS signals. Furthermore, it can be categorized depending on its source: for example, there is self-generated data, data collected (mostly in automatized ways) from the web (known as data scraping), and data retrieved from other outside sources.

⁵ Laney, D. (2001). 3D Data Management: Controlling Data Volume, Velocity, and Veracity. META Group. <http://blogs.gartner.com/doug-llaney/files/2012/01/ad949-3D-Data-Management-Controlling-Data-Volume-Velocity-and-Variety.pdf>. Veracity is defined as the complexities related to the analysis of big data and related questions of accuracy.

⁶ Jacobson, B, K. Hone and J. Kurbalija. (2018). Data Diplomacy: Updating Diplomacy to the big data. Switzerland: DiploFoundation.

⁷ Jacobson, Hone, and Kurbalija.

years has produced various outputs including ASEAN Briefs, yearbook, other publications, database/web portal, press releases, and discussion forum that have served as platform for more international cooperation with existing and prospective partners in the near future. These outputs can be employed to better understand the current situation, forecast issues and challenges and design appropriate strategies to address the recent situation in the national and regional levels. A revisit of the Broad Framework for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Statistics will show that the national/ASEAN governments, donor countries, dialogue partners and international organizations are working together to realize the ASEAN Community. This mechanism provides the overall framework of regional cooperation in the collection, production and dissemination of ASEAN statistics including the identification of ASEAN Statistical Indicators through a list of statistical domains required to produce data for monitoring 3 pillars of ASEAN integration on economic, socio-cultural and political-security, as well as the design of ACSS Protocol for New Data Request from ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to guide the prioritization of new data requests from ASEAN sectoral bodies and the allocation of resources for provision of statistics in a timely manner.⁸

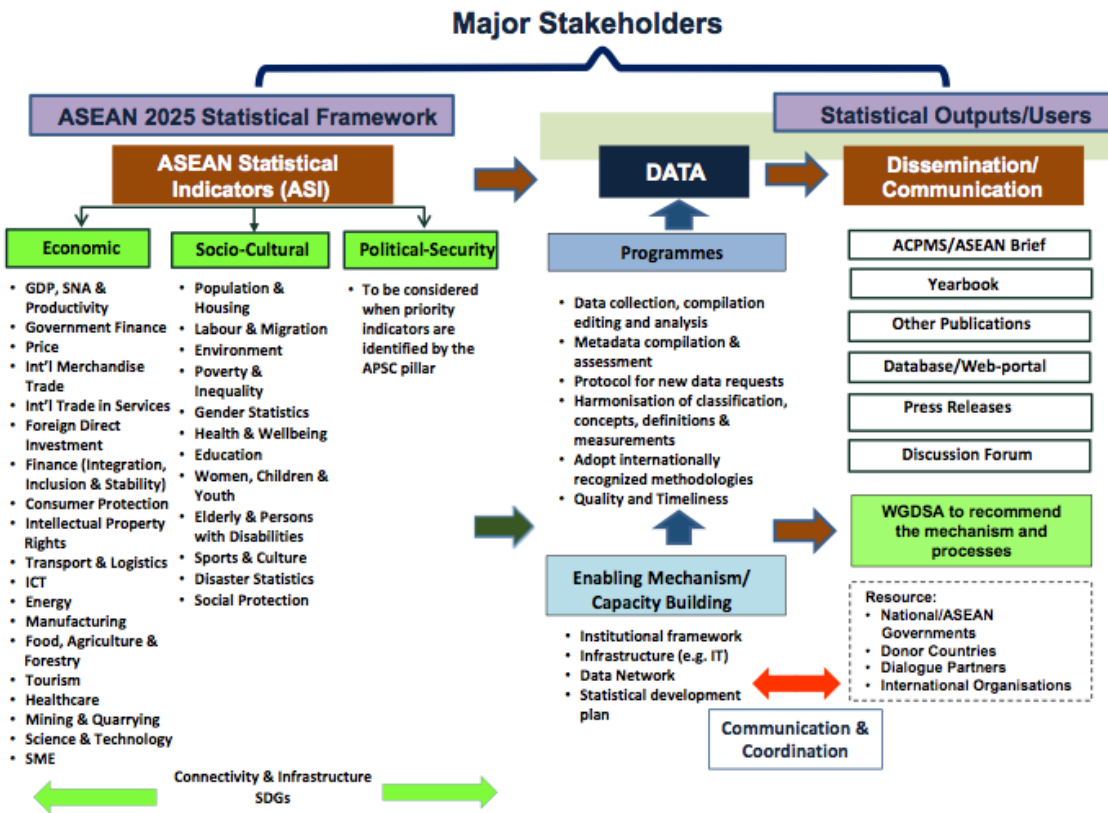
Even in data collection/production, one can visibly observe the presence of an active regionalism. It should be noted that prior to the technological revolution, data are considered confidential. Sharing of information is not easily accessible even from one department to another within one member state, much more for information to be shared with member states in the region. In early years of the regional body, even the presence of data may not necessarily be enough to generate information for the region, much more for consolidation. This scenario in recent times is no longer the case. Data diplomacy really works for the ASEAN and there is already an office, the ASEAN Statistics based in the ASEAN Secretariat mandated to consolidate the information particularly the ASI.

For ministries of foreign affairs, big data has so far mostly been used for consular affairs, for which the management of extensive databases is key. Increasingly, citizens are expecting a user-friendly, digitized, service delivery from their governments, and consular departments are under pressure to keep their services up to date. From e-visas to monitoring nationals abroad, and timely assistance in emergency settings, big data can be of great value.⁹ In the regional level, the ASEAN Secretariat has also employed data particularly statistics in the conduct of its internal and external relations. This is best exemplified by the establishment of the ASEAN Statistics Division (ASEANstats).

⁸ Broad Framework for Sustainable Development of ASEAN Statistics (BFSDAS). Latest version as approved by ACSS6, Nov. 2016

⁹ DiploFoundation. (2017). Data Diplomacy: Mapping the Field. Switzerland: DiploFoundation and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

BFS DAS Rev. 2 (as endorsed by ACSS6, Nov. 2016)



Furthermore, data can be particularly helpful in strategic planning and policy research. For example, in bilateral relations, data can help with mapping their political, economic, cultural and other aspects. In multilateral relations, data can provide a comprehensive survey on the legal status of international agreements. Smart searches through databases of signatures and ratifications of international agreements can provide patterns on countries' position on specific international legal issues. Data can also complement diplomatic reporting in substantiating arguments and challenging assumptions and bias. In public diplomacy, data obtained from social media platforms can serve as a basis for sentiment analysis towards particular issues, regions, or countries, as well as to measure the impact of information campaigns. Furthermore, network analysis can point towards influencers and agenda-setters, together with social media profiling this can support the creation of targeted messages.¹⁰

Finally, big data can be useful in monitoring global trends, and in particular – the progress towards the SDGs.¹¹

In the conduct of diplomacy, data is not only used in negotiations as tool but also as the topic of many negotiations. There are many multilateral negotiation processes that have started to address big data.¹² In fact, in recent decades, each government in the region such as the Philippines strived to strengthen its data collection and empowered its statistical agency to be the data provider in negotiations and in the conduct of its bilateral particularly economic transactions.

¹⁰ DiploFoundation.

¹¹ DiploFoundation.

¹² Jacobson, Hone, and Kurbalija.

Thus, the Philippines reorganizes and strengthens its statistical system in 2013 to support the national directions. These range from the inclusion of data flows in the negotiation of trade agreements to the negotiation of international standards for big data at the ITU. Trade diplomacy also depends a lot on data and statistics. Compared to other units in an MFA, the trade department is usually more used to collecting, processing, and managing data. Prior to the 'big data era', it was already used to aggregating large data sets, building human capacity around data science, and shifting towards a more data-informed culture. Senior management expects proposals and advice backed by empirical data with good baselines, and the ability to track progress.

In the regional level, the ASEAN Secretariat has also created an office that will gather data and consolidate the information. The ASEAN Statistics Division (ASEANstats) is one of the divisions under the ASEAN Economic Community Department of the ASEAN Secretariat in charge of providing statistical services to the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN bodies and ASEAN stakeholders. ASEANstats is also the technical arm of the ASEAN Community of Statistical System (ACSS) and is guided by the intentions and goals of the ASEAN Charter and vision of the ASEAN Community in the design and implementation of statistical cooperation activities. It is responsible to the information requirements of regional policies, and programs as well as the priorities spelled out in the ASEAN national strategies for the development of statistics in developing and compiling indicators and data for ASEAN purposes. This office adopts the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and adhere in particular, to the core values of public service, user orientation, integrity, excellence, professionalism and independence in the development and delivery of statistical products and services.

ASEANstats is committed to serving the statistical information needs of the peoples, institutions, businesses and civil societies of ASEAN and of the international community. ASEANstats aims to become an authoritative source of relevant, comparable and timely ASEAN statistics to facilitate knowledge building in a strong, confident and respected ASEAN Community. This office, in cooperation with the ASEAN Member States' national statistical systems, also aims to help build and promote the use of knowledge about the ASEAN Community – its peoples and institutions, economies, societies and cultures.¹³

In particular, the ASEANstats is mandated to develop regional indicators, data frameworks and systems for monitoring ASEAN Community goals and initiatives; compile, consolidate, disseminate and communicate statistical information on the ASEAN region and its Member States; provide statistical services to the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN bodies and ASEAN stakeholders; harmonize ASEAN statistics – standardization of concepts, definitions, classifications, and approaches; implement, coordinate and facilitate regional statistical programs and activities including those of the working groups and task forces within the ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics, with guidance from the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee; and implement policies and facilitation of partnerships between the ACSS Committee, ASEAN bodies, and international/regional statistical communities.

To carry out its functions, the ASEANstats mobilizes the national statistical systems and institutions in the ASEAN Member States and assist in building their relevant statistical capacities. It also liaises with the national statistical institutions, international/regional statistical agencies and related organizations on technical cooperation and development. Lastly, the said office also monitors and evaluates the implementation of programs and activities on ASEAN statistical cooperation.

Moreover, this office works hand in hand with ASEAN Member States in building statistical capacities, promoting international standards and best practices, and harmonizing statistics through, among others, the following mechanisms: (ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS) Committee, and ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate (AIMD). The ACSS and AIMD are both

¹³ <https://www.aseanstats.org/about-aseanstats/>. 2017.

supported by various working groups on international merchandise trade statistics; international investment statistics; international trade in services; data sharing, dissemination and communication of ASEAN statistics; social development goals; and system on national account.

The ACSS Committee was formally launched in November 2011 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The ACSS Committee assumes greater role and stronger mandate on ASEAN Statistical Cooperation. It is mandated to lead the building of the ASEAN Community Statistical System in 2015 by strengthening the capacity of the national statistical systems and the ASEAN Secretariat; improving comparability of ASEAN statistics; enhancing communication between data users and producers; establishing an appropriate institutional framework for ASEAN statistics; and supporting evidence-based and informed decision making in the ASEAN Community.

The AIMD, on the other hand, is one of the three directorates under the ASEAN Economic Community Department of the ASEAN Secretariat. The AIMD is responsible, among others, for spearheading the implementation of regional surveillance and economic integration monitoring in ASEAN; providing high level policy and technical advice and recommendations to support ASEAN economic integration initiatives; and shaping the economic research and policy analysis program of ASEAN Secretariat. ASEANstats is one of its four divisions.

As mentioned earlier, these offices are supported by six working groups. First is the *Working Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics* (WGIMTS). This working group was created to facilitate the development and harmonization of IMTS, enhance timeliness and effectiveness of IMTS data sharing and dissemination, and to better respond to the information requirements in support of economic integration and development as envisaged in the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the WGIMTS were adopted at the Third Session of the ACSS Committee in October 2013. Second is the *Working Group on International Investment Statistics* (WGIIS). This working is designed to promote the development, compilation, dissemination and reporting of international investment statistics by ASEAN Member States for the design, development, implementation and monitoring of ASEAN investment policies and programs. The ToR of the WGIIS were adopted at the Second of the ACSS Committee in September 2012.

The *Working Group on Statistics of International Trade in Services* (WGSITS) is the third group which is mandated to supervise the initiative on the harmonization of SITS; and address the emerging needs for more detailed, more comparable, and more comprehensive SITS in various forms. The fourth one is the *Working Group on Data Sharing, Analysis, Dissemination and Communication of ASEAN Statistics* (WGDSA) aims to improve the national and regional capacities in information development and analysis, dissemination and communication of statistics in support of regional policy and program implementation, monitoring/evaluation, and improved governance and accountability in ASEAN.

The fifth one is the *Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals Indicators* (WGSDGI) which aims to address the statistical requirements in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the SDGs in the ASEAN Member States (AMS), in the ASEAN, as well as the region's position at the global level. The establishment of WGSDGI was initially to address the emerging global initiatives from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted by the world leaders in September 2015. Statistical systems in all countries are urged to promote stronger global cooperation as well as regional and national stakeholder partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources for supporting the implementation of SDG. This group is tasked to work on the implementation plan of the ASEAN SDG data compilation in AMS, including defining the SDG priority indicators, harmonization of the indicators, data collection templates and procedures, as well as data dissemination/communication, which is in line with ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and its Blueprints. The last but not the least is the *Working Group on System on National Account* (WGSNA) which is mandated to coordinate in promoting the production and dissemination of

national accounts statistics for monitoring the economic performance and development of individual ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN as a whole.

Moreover, the ASEAN Secretariat through ASEANstats is offering online and offline statistical information such as statistical publications and online database. The former includes ASEAN Statistical Yearbook, ASEAN Economic Community Chartbook, ASEAN Community in Figures, ASEAN Statistics Leaflet and others. The latter, on the other hand, offers downloadable data on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Foreign Direct Investment, Tourism, Population, GDP and other indicators.

III. Beyond ASEAN: Data Diplomacy with External Partners

In terms of cooperation beyond ASEAN, the most tangible data diplomatic collaboration is observable in the relations of European Union (EU) and its Member States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its Member States in the publication of the 40 Years of EU–ASEAN Cooperation — key statistics. This publication provides a selection of statistics on EU and ASEAN. This online publication aims to give an insight into a range of socioeconomic issues concerning EU–ASEAN relations.¹⁴ The two regional bodies acknowledged the importance of high quality statistics in the advancement of the relations. In fact, the ASEAN–EU Dialogue Relations has greatly relied on good quality statistics to analyze the current situation and identify the most appropriate policies to progress towards common goals. The need to address current global challenges is generating a growing demand for good quality statistics. Therefore, both European and ASEAN partners are very active — on national, regional and international levels — in promoting the relevance and comparability of statistics. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a particular example of such a challenge and statisticians have played an important role in the definition of the indicators that will monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁵ Capacity building for producing the SDG indicators based on sound methodology and corresponding to the required quality levels will be a focus of cooperation in statistics. By working together to improve the quality of official statistics, it will be possible to meet user needs for the policy of sustainable development.

Moreover, EU has collaborated further with ASEAN in the implementation of Capacity Building Project for Monitoring Integration Progress and Statistics (COMPASS) in providing Technical Assistance to support the ACSS and ASEAN integration monitoring from 2014 to 2018. The project has contributed in strengthening the ACSS institutional framework, improving the availability and comparability of key statistics for monitoring regional integration, narrowing the gaps in statistical capacity between ASEAN Member States, and strengthening the capacity of the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Directorate to monitor the progress of ASEAN regional integration. The support from the ASEAN Regional Integration Support by the EU (ARISE) Plus Program for initiatives in the ACSS work plans. Expected outcomes of the program include further strengthening of the coordination function of the ACSS and improvements to national and regional statistical capacities to meet increasing statistical demands from ASEAN Sectoral Bodies.

The ASEAN has also cooperated with development partners and international organizations such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Population Fund, International Labour Organisation, and Food and

¹⁴ 2017. 40 Years of EU–ASEAN Cooperation. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU-ASEAN_cooperation_-_introduction_to_key_statistics#High_quality_statistics_and_capacity-building.

¹⁵ 2017. 40 Years of EU–ASEAN Cooperation. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU-ASEAN_cooperation_-_introduction_to_key_statistics#High_quality_statistics_and_capacity-building.

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations regarding informative sharing of experiences and best practices on conducting the census on population and housing, economic or agriculture.¹⁶

The ASEAN has also collaborated with China in establishing the Terms of Reference for Cooperation in Statistical Information Sharing between the ACSS and the National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China. Both parties also pushed for the publication of the third issue of the Statistical Yearbook of China-ASEAN in 2018.¹⁷

IV. Conclusion

Indeed, data diplomacy is now an important facet in the conduct of external relations of one's country. While this study focuses only on the statistics rather than the whole big data, the use of statistics is more than enough to say that data diplomacy is gaining relative importance in the diplomatic world. The ASEAN for instance and its member countries have employed the existence of data in the management of consular affairs, the conduct of strategic planning policy research, public diplomacy, and the implementation of development programs.

ASEAN has established the Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators (WGSDGI), to address the statistical requirements in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the SDGs in the ASEAN Member States, and the region's position at the global level, particularly for discussing the development of ASEAN SDG indicators, including the implementation roadmap and work plan. Moreover, data diplomacy also contributed in narrowing the development gap by improving IMTS, FDIS and SITS in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam since 2012. It also facilitated the statistical cooperation among ASEAN Member States (ASEAN-help-ASEAN program) since 2015. A pool of regional experts in the key areas of statistics through the framework of ASEAN-Help-ASEAN cooperation has been determined and tapped. This initiative aims to advance the statistical capacities of the ASEAN Member States particularly Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam and the ASEANstats as well through continuous provision of trainings, workshops, and study visits.¹⁸ In fact, the importance of DD in various economic engagements is attested by Ambassador Elizabeth Buensuceso, former Philippine Representative to ASEAN. She said that DD *"must be true in the economic pillar especially when arguing in favor of free trade agreements. We had a meeting once in the area of leveling the development gap among the ten members. We used statistics to show how membership in ASEAN has helped the members fulfill their SDG commitments"*.¹⁹

Sharing of data using common references and standards were expanded to build a comprehensive database of ASEAN statistics and facilitate dissemination and communication of statistics among stakeholders. Harmonization guidelines, data dissemination and communication policies, and data sharing and exchange mechanisms were developed and implemented through the years in line with the rules-based principle defined in the ASEAN Charter.

It is also noted that improved communication and interaction between the ACSS and key user groups at the regional and national levels were accordingly strengthened to help in the determination of regional statistical priorities and promote wider application of statistics in policy creation, decision making and monitoring in the ASEAN Community.²⁰

¹⁶ <https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ACSS8-Joint-Media-Statement.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ACSS8-Joint-Media-Statement.pdf>

¹⁸ https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ACSS7_JointMediaStatement.pdf

¹⁹ Ambassador Elizabeth Buensuceso, former Philippine Representative to ASEAN. Interview. 2 September 2019.

²⁰ ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics (2010-2015). https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ASEAN-Framework-191010-FINAL-2_.pdf. 19 OCT 2010

The importance of data sharing and data diplomacy has been exemplified during the conduct of several meetings annually with ASEAN Member States and external partners. Table 1 shows that the regional body has been engaging with the member states and with its partners not less than 100 meetings per year and majority of these engagements require data particularly statistical information. From 2016-2019, the notional calendar of ASEAN has shown that the stakeholders are continuously engaging with their colleagues in the region and with their external partners through meetings and dialogues between 100-600 occasions.

Data diplomacy is not only happening within the region. AMS and the ASEAN as a regional body have collaborated with several development partners and international organizations such as the European Union, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Population Fund, International Labour Organisation and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in strengthening the initiatives of information sharing and data collection and dissemination.

Having good quality statistics will greatly assist the decision makers and planners in making a well-informed decision through better appreciation of real and current situation on ground and subsequently identify the most appropriate policies and strategies to progress towards common goals. Thus, the regional body and its stakeholders should strengthen its existing data

Table 1. ASEAN Notional Calendar of Meetings/Events, 2016-2019

| YEAR | Total Activities |
|------|------------------|
| 2016 | 603 |
| 2017 | 136 |
| 2018 | 291 |
| 2019 | 154 |

Source: <https://asean.org/calendar/official-meetings/>

diplomatic mechanisms and innovate it if necessary in order to respond to a fast changing demands of the future.