

FIT IN ASEAN

Promoting multilingualism in ASEAN



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES TRADUCTEURS
La voix des associations de traducteurs, d'interprètes et de terminologues à travers le monde

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRANSLATORS
The voice of associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists around the world

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Photo of some of
ASEAN industry
leaders; logo of
ASEAN; with Vice
President of MCU

As specially invited guest of Prof. Dr. Maneerat Sawasdiwat Na Ayutthaya, Chair and convenor of the steering committee of the ASEAN Center for Multilingualism, Translation and Interpretation (MTI) and President of Association of ASEAN Translation Industry (AATI), Dr. Liu participated in the joint annual summit of professional and industry leaders in the ASEAN region and beyond.



Photo from ASEAN MTI summit

In 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) resolved to adopt English as the official language of the entire ASEAN Community against a background of 11 national official languages and average English competency of around 40%. Prof. Maneerat Sawasdiwat and her steering committee are committed to ensuring wider community engagement, increased regional collaboration and better informed decision-making across all levels of government through multilingualism with highly trained professional translators, interpreters and terminologists.

MTI approached FIT at the APTIF8 conference in Xi'an in June this year. At the same time, FIT Associate member ZHAW, which has been part of this committee, also saw the importance of collaboration with FIT, as FIT can share its expertise, resources and experience in professional issues pertinent to multilingualism.

President Dr Henry Liu shared the stage with other stakeholders and experts in the wider Asia Pacific Region, including China, Korea and the USA.

In his address at the live streamed summit, President Liu highlighted the benefits of multilingualism for the people, culture, business and the government and therefore the urgent need for a local, regional, national and ASEAN-wide commitment to the multilingual principles and values. He also gave a comprehensive overview of its importance and possible pathways, based on international best practice in professional training for translators, interpreters and terminologists across different contexts, ranging from drafting

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multilateral agreements, to implementing directives and standards, to community interpreting and refugee determination and resettlement. He concluded by emphasising the need for establishment of strong, independent, accountable national professional associations of translators, interpreters and terminologists.

During the three-day summit, there were detailed planning sessions as well as passionate discussions on the future direction and strategy of both MTI and AATI. The delegates agreed to lobby their national governments on the need for multilingual policy and its associated infrastructure. They also resolved to hold the next regional summit with the 3rd professional conference for ASEAN practitioners, industry, users and policy makers in Hanoi next November.

After the summit concluded, President Liu met with the Associate Vice President of the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), a University founded by Buddhist Order with religious and liberal arts programmes. MCU has been active in religious translation research and training and is also the host of the ASEAN Studies Center and would like to be considered to host an eventual ASEAN Center for MTI.

ASEAN is one of the most dynamic regions of the world and is inherently multilingual and proud of its diversity. FIT is committed to fulfilling its mission to promote best practice in T&I and to support establishment of professional associations where there is a need (Articles 4e and 4g of the By-laws). We look forward to welcoming new members from this region to complement our members in Indonesia and Malaysia and we hope to see ASEAN becoming a Centre of excellence in multilingualism, translation, interpreting and terminology.

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