APEC Business Advisory Council

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

[PRESS RELEASE]

ABAC 2026 Report Handover to Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry

Pictured (by Information Department): *Mr. Pengiran Aki Ismasufian Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Brunei, and Mr Hafriz Fayadh, Managing Director of Exceltech Solutions Sdn Bhd. presenting the APEC Business Advisory Council ("ABAC") report for 2026 to Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry*

Bandar Seri Begawan, 31 October 2026 - ABAC Brunei Members, Mr. Pengiran Aki Ismasufian Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Brunei and Mr Hafriz Fayadh, Managing Director of Exceltech Solutions Sdn Bhd today presented the APEC Business Advisory Council ("ABAC") Report for 2026 to Yang Berhormat Dato Seri Setia Dr Haji Abdul Manaf bin Haji Metussin, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Brunei Darussalam.

Carrying the theme *"Openness, Connectivity and Synergy"*, the 2026 report outlines business-driven recommendations to strengthen regional integration, harness digital innovation, and advance sustainable, inclusive growth across the Asia-Pacific.

The report emphasizes the importance of **openness** in trade and investment, including progress towards the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific and reforms to ensure predictable, rules-based commerce. It highlights **connectivity** as a driver of resilience, calling for stronger transport and logistics networks, paperless trade, and interoperable digital payment systems. Finally, it underscores **synergy** between technology, sustainability and human development — from enabling AI and quantum innovation to advancing healthcare, energy transition and climate resilience.

[Quote by Mr. Pengiran Aki Ismasufian Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Brunei]

"The ABAC 2026 report reflects our collective commitment to building a more connected, resilient and inclusive Asia-Pacific economy. For Brunei Darussalam, the report provides an important platform to advance priorities that are particularly relevant to our national development agenda, including economic diversification, sustainable finance, digital transformation and greater regional connectivity.

The handover of this report to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry represents an important opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the public and private sectors. By translating ABAC's recommendations into practical initiatives and meaningful collaboration, we can unlock new opportunities for Brunei's businesses, enhance our regional competitiveness and contribute to a more prosperous and sustainable Asia-Pacific."

[Quote by Mr Hafriz Fayadh, Managing Director of Exceltech Solutions Sdn Bhd]

"As a representative of Brunei's business community at ABAC, I believe that Openness, Connectivity and Synergy are essential pillars for building a more resilient and competitive Asia-Pacific economy. For Brunei Darussalam, these priorities present opportunities to strengthen our regional economic

partnerships, expand cross-border trade and investment, and position our local businesses to participate more actively in evolving regional value chains.

Importantly, our engagement at ABAC must go beyond dialogue and meetings. We are actively working to translate some of these regional engagements into tangible initiatives for Brunei Darussalam, including an initiative currently being developed with the ambition of bringing it to implementation in Brunei next year. We hope this will create meaningful economic opportunities for the country and demonstrate how international business collaboration can deliver practical outcomes at home.

Ultimately, through closer collaboration between government and the private sector, we want to ensure that Brunei is not merely participating in the region's economic development, but actively shaping it and capturing the opportunities it creates."

The recommendations will be formally presented to APEC Economic Leaders at the **ABAC Dialogue** with Leaders in **Shenzhen, China, in November 2026**, reaffirming ABAC's commitment to shaping an open, connected and synergistic Asia-Pacific economy.

APEC Member Economies: Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; Philippines; Russia; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America; and Viet Nam.

ABAC was created by APEC Leaders in 1995 to be the primary voice of business in APEC. Each economy has three members who are appointed by their respective Leaders. They meet four times a year in preparation for the presentation of their recommendations to the Leaders in a dialogue that is a key event in the annual Leaders Meeting.

ABAC Brunei is represented by Mr. Pengiran Aki Ismasufian Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Brunei, and Mr Hafriz Fayadh, Managing Director of Exceltech Solutions Sdn Bhd.

Under China's leadership, ABAC is pursuing a work program under the theme "Openness, Connectivity and Synergy", focusing on strengthening regional integration, advancing digital and transport connectivity, and fostering synergy between innovation, sustainability and human development to drive inclusive, future-ready growth across the Asia-Pacific region.

ABAC 2026 Chair is Fanrong Li (China), with Co-Chairs Sy Hung Ho (Viet Nam) and Kyuho Lee (Korea), with four (4) working group chairs, namely: Anna Curzon, Regional Economic Integration Working Group (REIWG); Zeng Qi, Connectivity Working Group (CWG); Janet De Silva, Digital Innovation Working Group (DIWG); Michaela Browning, and Julia Torreblance, Sustainability Working Group (SWG).

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