

Opening Remarks on the ASAIHL Special Issue

Empowering Academia, Inspiring Action: Advancing Climate Solutions Through Southeast Asian Scholarship

It is with great pride and a deep sense of purpose that I write this Foreword as one of the Guest Editors of this distinguished special issue of the *Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (JHSSR)*, dedicated to the 2024 ASAIHL Conference. This edition marks a significant milestone, not only for the Journal but also for the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) and its longstanding commitment to regional and global academic collaboration.

Founded in 1956, ASAIHL is one of Southeast Asia's most enduring academic associations. Conceived by visionary university leaders and supported from its inception by the Thai government, ASAIHL has championed the advancement of higher education through mutual self-help among its member institutions. Its objectives—strengthening teaching, research, and public service capacities—reflect a bold and inclusive mission to cultivate regional identity, interdependence, and excellence across borders. Over the decades, ASAIHL has become a vibrant clearing-house of academic innovation, offering platforms for dialogue, resource sharing, and international cooperation among universities striving to address pressing societal challenges.

The 2024 ASAIHL Conference, hosted by the esteemed Universitas Airlangga in Surabaya, Indonesia, from November 19–22, served as a timely and urgent call to action. With the theme “*University's Role in Advancing Climate Crises Reduction*,” the conference underscored the vital position of higher education institutions in confronting one of the greatest existential threats of our time: climate change. Through robust discussions and pioneering research, participants explored transformative strategies, including green curriculum design, community-based environmental services, and sustainable university-industry partnerships. The conference reaffirmed the indispensable leadership of academia in crafting climate-responsive policies, knowledge systems, and solutions.

I would like to extend our special thanks and heartfelt appreciation to the ASAIHL Executive Committee members, particularly **Academician Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Syed Jalaludin bin Syed Salim**, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and **Dr. Ninnat Olanvoravuth**,



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Secretary-General Emeritus of ASAIHL, whose strong support and steadfast commitment made this publication possible. Their vision and leadership have been instrumental in enabling this special edition to come to fruition, and in reinforcing the role of scholarly dissemination as a catalyst for positive regional and global change.

This renewed commitment to excellence comes at a time when Asian universities are gaining unprecedented global recognition for their impact and innovation. **Notably, Universitas Airlangga has risen to 10th place in the latest Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, reflecting the region's growing influence in advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs).** With 22 of the top 50 universities now based in Asia—surpassing many traditional academic powerhouses—this shift signals a broader transformation in how global academia values contribution over legacy. However, amidst these successes, critical reflection persists. The integration of artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT, into scholarly writing has raised questions about originality and the preservation of personal voice in academic expression. These trends underscore the importance of intentional, ethical scholarship that combines technological innovation with human creativity and regional insight.

In this context, I am honoured that *Horizon JHSSR* (ISSN: 2682-9096) was selected as the publication platform for this ASAIHL special issue. As a journal committed to high-impact, interdisciplinary scholarship, JHSSR has consistently showcased rigorous research in the humanities and social sciences with global relevance. Our growing reputation is built on a foundation of academic integrity, timely dissemination, and thought leadership. Being entrusted by ASAIHL to curate and publish the finest contributions from this landmark conference is both a validation of our mission and a reaffirmation of our responsibility.

This special issue is more than a collection of conference papers. It is a testament to the intellectual dynamism and ethical urgency with which ASAIHL member institutions approach climate-related challenges. The works presented here blend critical inquiry with practical innovation, demonstrating how academic institutions can—and must—serve as engines of environmental transformation. By foregrounding regional perspectives and grounded solutions, this edition enriches the global discourse on climate justice, ecological resilience, and sustainable development.

I believe this issue will significantly enhance the image of ASAIHL as not only a facilitator of academic exchange but also a leader in championing solutions to global crises. It represents a powerful example of how scholarly collaboration across Southeast Asia can yield insights that resonate far beyond the region.

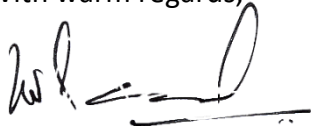
Looking ahead, *Horizon JHSSR* is hoping to publish another special issue based on the forthcoming 2025 ASAIHL Conference, to be hosted by Beltei International University in Phnom

Penh, Cambodia from July 6–8. JHSSR eagerly anticipates another rich dialogue among scholars and leaders committed to impactful research and regional advancement.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to all contributors, reviewers, the ASAIHL Secretariat, and the organizing committee at Universitas Airlangga. May this special edition inspire continued collaboration and bold thinking in our shared pursuit of a more sustainable and just future.

Thank you for reading JHSSR.

With warm regards,



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