

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Members,

I'm extremely grateful to USABC's Board Chairman Jeff Perlman and the entire Board of Directors for confirming me as President and CEO as of May 1. I couldn't be more pleased and energized to fully take on this role working with our wide range of leading member companies and our motivated and creative staff.

This week, I was proud to be in Manila where our team has broken new ground in cooperating with the Government of the Philippines to deeply prepare and launch a Strategic Action Plan to support the Philippines' ASEAN Chairship. That followed the very impactful Vietnam Business Mission and a number of other activities to advance members' goals. Next I head to Singapore and then KL for our annual business missions, where I'll express USABC's determination to help in the face of energy and supply chain challenges.

We need your ideas and guidance, so please keep those coming to me directly (bmcfeters@usasean.org) or to our teams in DC and the ASEAN region.

Best regards,
Brian



APRIL EVENTS



Briefing on the Global Political Outlook for Indonesia

On April 6, the Indonesia Committee held an Exclusive Briefing with Mari Elka Pangestu, Vice Chairwoman of the National Economic Council. Hosted by Philip Morris International, Vice Chair of the Indonesia Committee, the briefing brought together USABC members for a discussion on the current global political and economic outlook for Indonesia. The discussion was focused on Indonesia's outlook in navigating global challenges, including rising energy prices, shifting trade dynamics, and evolving supply chains. It also highlighted the importance of maintaining macro stability, strengthening investor confidence, and ensuring policy consistency and clarity to support continued investment and economic growth.



2026 Malaysia Business Mission Planning Session with Ambassador Shahrul

On April 7, ahead of the Council's upcoming Malaysia Business Mission (May 12-14), the US-ASEAN Business Council convened members for a briefing on Malaysia's economic outlook, featuring Ambassador Tan Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob. The ambassador outlined Malaysia's 2026 economic priorities and key developments in the U.S.-Malaysia trade and investment relationship, while engaging members on opportunities to drive high-value, sustainable investment. The session also served as the first planning discussion for the 2026 Malaysia Business Mission, with updates on priorities including strengthening economic ties, supporting business continuity ahead of GE16, and advancing Malaysia's digital and innovation ecosystem.



USABC-WIIT Panel Discussion on ASEAN Digital Economic Integration

On April 8, the US-ASEAN Business Council, in collaboration with the Association of Women in International Trade (WIIT), was pleased to host a panel titled “ASEAN Digital Economic Integration: Building Secure and Interoperable Digital Payment Ecosystem.” Opened by our COO, Maggie Hanson-Muse, the discussion was moderated by Barbara Weisel, who was announced as USABC’s Senior Advisor at the event. Representing diverse views of the governments and private sector, the panel included the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Philippine Embassy Felipe F. Cariño III, as well as representatives from the U.S. Treasury, Visa, Mastercard, and Qualcomm.



Virtual 2026 Business Mission to the 13th ASEAN Finance Ministers' & Central Bank Governors' Meeting

On April 8-10, 2026, the Council led a virtual delegation of 10 U.S. businesses to the 13th ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting (AFMGM), with the Philippines serving as the ASEAN Chair 2026. Led by Ambassador Brian McFeeters (ret.), the Council presented an industry whitepaper titled “Beyond Borders: Advancing an Inclusive and Resilient Digital Financial Future for ASEAN” during the AFMGM – USABC plenary consultation session with the Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors, with themes including accelerating ASEAN’s investment climate through digital transformation, enhancing the region’s digital payments ecosystem, and advocating for future-proof policies to safeguard long-term development. They also met with officials from the Cambodian Ministry of Economy and Finance, the National Bank of Cambodia, the Monetary Authority of Singapore,

the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Asian Development Bank, and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council Philippines. Access the USABC whitepaper [here](#), and read the official AFMGM statement [here](#).



Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Workshop in Malaysia

On April 9, the Council convened an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Workshop in Kuala Lumpur. The event brought together over 60 participants, including senior officials from key government agencies: Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT), Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry (MTI), Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (KPKM), alongside representatives from the private sector, industry associations, and academia. The workshop provided a platform for dialogue on Malaysia’s evolving EPR landscape, covering key considerations in policy design, governance, and implementation.

Digital Transformation in Government: Artificial Intelligence

The Council and ASEAN-BAC Philippines concluded the Digital Transformation in Government (DIGIT) Series with a two-part engagement on artificial intelligence from April 13-14, combining a capacity-building workshop with a high-level roundtable to advance both technical understanding and policy dialogue ahead of the Philippines’ 2026 ASEAN Chairship.



Workshop on Artificial Intelligence

A workshop drawing 180 participants from 64 government agencies underscored a brisk appetite—among both senior

officials and technical staff—for practical guidance on adopting artificial intelligence. The discussions centered on real-world applications of AI in government, with particular attention to turning strategy into execution under the National AI Strategy 2.0. Government perspectives were led by Undersecretary Christina Faye Condez-De Sagon of the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Undersecretary Leah Buendia of the Department of Science and Technology, Undersecretary Maria Francesca Del Rosario of the Department of Budget and Management, Director Franz De Leon of the Advanced Science and Technology Institute, and Assistant Director Karl Lyndon Pacolor of the Department of Trade and Industry.



Roundtable Discussion on Artificial Intelligence

The final session in a series of five roundtables convened to support the Philippines' ASEAN chairmanship gathered 81 participants from 20 government agencies, alongside private-sector partners, to refine policy priorities on artificial intelligence and regional cooperation. It revealed a notable convergence between public and private actors on several fronts: the value of regional initiatives, the merits of risk-based regulation, and the urgency of strengthening talent, data governance and digital infrastructure across ASEAN as negotiations toward the Digital Economy Framework Agreement progress. Key interventions were delivered by Assistant Majority Leader Brian Poe of the House of Representatives, Undersecretary Allan Gepty of the Department of Trade and Industry, and Director Franz De Leon of the Department of Science and Technology – Advanced Science and Technology Institute.

April World Bank and IMF Sideline Meetings



(left to right) Ambassador Indroyono, Governor Perry, and Minister Purbaya



(left to right) Governor Remolona, Secretary Go, and Ambassador Romualdez

On the sidelines of the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings in Washington, the Council partnered with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to convene high-level engagements with ASEAN government delegations. On April 14, the Council and the Chamber co-hosted a roundtable with Secretary of Finance of the Philippines Frederick Go and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Eli Remolona. Secretary Go shared perspectives on the country's economic outlook and investment priorities, while member companies discussed business opportunities, legislative priorities, and digital innovation. The following day, the Council and the Chamber co-hosted a roundtable with Minister of Finance of Indonesia Purbaya Sadewa and Bank Indonesia Governor Perry Warjiyo. This marked Minister Purbaya's first visit to Washington in his current capacity, where he discussed Indonesia's fiscal and monetary strategies amid global economic uncertainty, bilateral relations under the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, and key sectoral issues.



2026 Vietnam Business Mission

The Council successfully concluded our flagship Business Mission to Vietnam on April 16 in Hanoi, marking our first major in-country mission of the year and a strong start to 2026. This mission achieved several important milestones. With senior executives from 52 leading U.S. companies participating, it was the first major foreign business group—and the first U.S. business delegation—to meet with newly elected Prime Minister Lê Minh

Hung and his Cabinet. Over the three days of the Mission (April 14–16), the Council delivered 18 high-level meetings and events, bringing together more than 120 delegates from a broad range of sectors, including energy, technology, financial services, aerospace, healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism.

Our delegation gained valuable first-hand insight into Vietnam's new leadership, including a rising generation of senior officials committed to reshaping the country's growth model over the coming decades. Prime Minister Lê Minh Hùng presented as a technocrat in the best sense—practical, disciplined, and focused on execution. His government has a clear plan and direction, closely aligned with Party priorities, with a strong emphasis on accelerating growth, improving efficiency, and removing longstanding barriers to investment. Vietnam's leadership is clearly focused on moving beyond growth driven by low costs or geography toward a more sustainable, innovation-led model grounded in talent, science, technology, and innovation. Importantly, this mission provided Council members with a rare opportunity to engage early, both at the start of the year and at the beginning of the new Cabinet's term. These early connections position our members well to follow up quickly, deepen partnerships, and take timely action as Vietnam moves forward with its next wave of reforms and development.

Strategic Action Plan Launch



Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s ASEAN Chair Response



Presentation of the Strategic Action Plan to the Philippine Government Through the Secretary of Trade and Industry (center)

On April 29, Ambassador Brian McFeeters (ret.) led the official launch of the Strategic Action Plan (SAP), presenting it to the Philippine Government in its capacity as the 2026 ASEAN Chair. Developed in partnership with ASEAN-BAC Philippines and shaped by exchanges with key Philippine Government agencies, the SAP consolidates USABC's private sector proposals across five strategic pillars: food security, healthcare, supply chains and logistics, digital economy and workforce development, and artificial intelligence. It is grounded in five [Discussion Papers](#), each taken up in dedicated roundtable discussions held from March to April 2026 with public and private sector stakeholders.

Coinciding with the 80th anniversary of Philippines-U.S. diplomatic relations, the SAP reflects the U.S. private sector commitment to supporting the Philippines in its regional leadership at a moment of urgency for ASEAN's economic and energy priorities. Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. and ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn both, in video messages, [welcomed the proposed plan](#), a strong signal of support ahead of the 48th ASEAN Leaders' Summit in May.

As the Chairship year progresses, USABC is actively working to convene an ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Dialogue timed around the ASEAN Summit in November. The Dialogue is envisioned as an opportunity to evaluate progress on the Strategic Action Plan and to chart the course forward together toward Singapore's 2027 Chairship and beyond.

USABC PODCAST



In the latest episode of *The Bottom Line with USABC*, President & CEO Ambassador Brian McFeeters sat down with Gracelin Baskaran, Director of the Critical Minerals Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Together, they unpacked the evolving landscape of critical minerals security, the global energy transition, and Southeast Asia's increasingly important role in building resilient supply chains. Check out the podcast [here](#), and subscribe to our new YouTube channel [here](#).



April's Episode with Dr. Baskaran (CSIS) and Amb. McFeeters

- [ASEAN Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting boosts regional economic cooperation \(Asia News Network\)](#)
- [Vietnam welcomes US investment in energy, technology, telecom infrastructure: Prime Minister \(The Investor\)](#)
- [US firms eye billion dollar investments in Vietnam \(DTI News\)](#)
- [Prime Minister meets delegation of leading US businesses \(Vietnam Net Global\)](#)
- [Joint Statement of the Thirteenth ASEAN Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting \(13th AFMGM\) \(MAS\)](#)
- [Asian Development Bank's proposed US\\$30 bil facility among key Asean meeting outcomes — MOF \(The Edge Malaysia\)](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 12-14 – 2026 Malaysia Business Mission

The 2026 Malaysia Business Mission will take place May 12-14 in Kuala Lumpur. The Mission will be led by Ambassador Brian McFeeters (ret.) and will feature a series of in-person meetings with senior Malaysian government officials and key stakeholders. This year's Mission will focus on four priority themes: advancing a predictable trade environment, strengthening business continuity ahead of Malaysia's GE16, accelerating Malaysia's digital and innovation ecosystem, and promoting sustainable, long-term economic growth. These themes are designed to support the Council's advocacy efforts while identifying concrete opportunities for U.S. private sector engagement. Participants will engage with senior Malaysian leaders across government and industry, including Amir Hamzah Azizan, Johari Abdul Ghani, Ramanan Ramakrishnan, and Arthur Joseph Kurup, as well as representatives from key institutions such as Khazanah Nasional. The Mission provides a timely opportunity to engage directly with policymakers, contribute to ongoing policy discussions, and deepen partnerships in one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic markets. In case of questions, please email Mega Valentina (mega@usasean.org).

COUNCIL IN THE NEWS

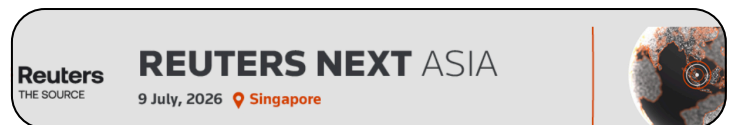
- [Amb. Brian Interview, Bilyonaryo \(9:40-34:00\) \(Youtube\)](#)
- [Suphajee pushes Thai-US trade deal in talks with envoy \(TheNation Thailand\)](#)
- [DoF pitches Philippines as investment hub \(Daily Tribune\)](#)
- [Go sells Philippines as 'Asia's next growth market' to US investors \(Bilyonaryo\)](#)
- [Creating a flexible policy environment to attract investment \(Nhan Dhan\)](#)
- [US businesses urge legal reforms for AI, data, and cloud computing \(Vietnam Investment Review\)](#)

MEDIA UPDATES



Op-ed on Thailand's Recent Policy Update

Read the piece [here](#).



Reuters NEXT Asia Live-Journalism Leadership Summit

NEXT Asia is bringing together 400 C-suite business and government leaders to discuss the most critical global challenges and opportunities at the Reuters NEXT Asia live-journalism leadership summit in Singapore on July 9. To register for the live broadcast, click the link [here](#).