

## **International policy team establishes Greening of Industry Network chapter in Bangkok.**

With the help of US-AEP, the Greening of Industry Network (GIN) established an Asia chapter at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University. The chapter will increase GIN's reach and resources as it continues to explore global issues of industry, environment, and society.

The three GIN chapters—the Asia chapter, along with nodes at the University of Twente in the Netherlands and Clark University in Massachusetts—comprise an international research and policy network of government ministries, research groups, corporations, and NGOs.

GIN-Asia was inaugurated with a three-day conference in July 1998, which focused on the economic and environmental questions that face Asia today. Three major participants at the conference were Dr. Somporn Kamolsiripichaiporn, director of GIN-Asia; Dr. Emil Salim, Indonesia's former minister of environment and current chairman of the board for the Indonesia Biodiversity Foundation (Yayasan KEHATI); and Prof. Melito Salazar, undersecretary of the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry. All three believe GIN-Asia will be critically important in helping Asia reconcile economic and technological development with long-term environmental sustainability.

## **Somporn Kamolsiripichaiporn envisions new GIN chapter as the foundation for a cleaner Asia.**

**Dr. Somporn Kamolsiripichaiporn sees GIN-Asia as a stage on which all the region's stakeholders will play their part in building an environmentally and economically sustainable future.**

"Partnering with US-AEP to launch this new regional program ... is timely," she says. "Thailand faces excessive pollution and depletion of natural resources as consequences of rapid industrialization. The economic crisis has intensified the detrimental effect on the environment." However, Dr. Somporn sees GIN-Asia as a mechanism for bringing environmental management back to the forefront—helping Asian industry improve its environmental performance, which in turn will improve its economic performance. "Preparation for future industrial investment must simultaneously incorporate environmental issues to improve industrial competitiveness and to lead to



sustainable development," she says.

As director of GIN-Asia and deputy director of the Environmental Research Institute at Chulalongkorn University, Dr. Somporn also sees GIN-Asia's educational value. "Education is the key element to changing human behavior. It is not just what you teach that improves understanding; it is how you employ different strategies to introduce the sense of belonging that drives people to participate," she suggests.

Through GIN-Asia, information on incorporating cleaner production in industry and increasing community participation can be shared among the private and public sectors throughout the region. Dr. Somporn sees this information-sharing as an important first step toward improving Asia's environmental and economic conditions. She plans to use information gathered through the network in an upcoming international environmental management course. "There is much diversity in environmental studies," she says, and hopes to link an array of disciplines and topics through GIN connections. ♦

## **Emil Salim sees GIN-Asia as Indonesia's link to clean technology.**

**The economic crisis has taken its toll on Indonesia. Prices for consumer goods have skyrocketed and industries collapsed.**

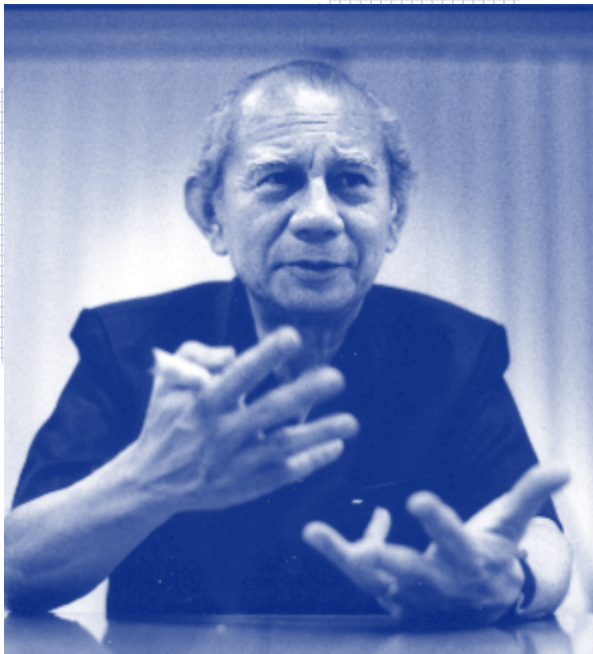
However, Dr. Emil Salim doesn't think these problems should prevent Indonesian companies from incorporating cleaner technologies and processes into their business practices. He sees an opportunity in the crisis: a chance to restructure industry along more environmentally sound principles.

**“US-AEP can be the link to clean technologies ... so that Indonesia and other developing countries won't need to reinvent the wheel.”**

In fact, Indonesia's former minister of the environment believes the effort is necessary if the country is to be competitive in the international market. “International markets are demanding ‘green,’” Dr. Salim says. “Therefore our country must move in this direction. Otherwise we lose the market. It's as simple as that. That's why ‘green technology’ and ‘green industry’ are not slogans anymore—they have become the need.”

Dr. Salim is convinced that GIN-Asia will help fulfill this need by providing technical assistance to Asian countries now suffering from the economic crisis. He also believes that the linkages US-AEP can provide will be crucial: “If we are now building a new rule for industry, why not build it on the basis of ‘green,’ utilizing clean technology already developed by other countries?” he asks. “US-AEP can be the link to clean technologies and

processes, so that Indonesia and other developing countries won't need to reinvent the wheel,” Dr. Salim says. “We are working toward industrialization, and we must, therefore, obtain new technology. That's why networking is so important.” ♦





## **Melito Salazar views GIN-Asia as a resource to increase global competitiveness.**

**Professor Melito Salazar, Jr., is racing to pull the Philippine economy out of the Asian economic crisis and create jobs for the millions who are now unemployed.**

As undersecretary of the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry and managing head of the Board of Investments, he is focusing on strengthening local companies. "My main role is to make Philippine industries globally competitive," he says, "and I see globalization as having a positive effect on the environment." He agrees with Emil Salim that to be competitive, companies must operate in line with the values of the global market—environmental performance being a key value. "If you had a company that was trying to get into the global market but did not have the right environmental practices, then it

would be a losing proposition," he says.

Prof. Salazar has long been involved in environmental issues. As a professor and consultant in the 1970s, he helped draft the presidential decree that created the country's first environmental code as well as the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In addition, Prof. Salazar established an environmental unit within the Board of Investments in 1996. The challenge, he says, is to "balance the interests of industry and vocal NGOs while maintaining both groups' trust."

He discussed this problem with other participants at the GIN-Asia conference in Bangkok. "During the interactive, small-group discussions, we were able to get an understanding of how things are progressing in other countries," he says.

Prof. Salazar sees Asia as a key addition to GIN's worldwide policy network. Because Asian countries have a wide range of experiences in environmental protection and varying levels of economic development, he believes the region offers a unique opportunity to study the effectiveness of various developmental, industrial, and environmental policies.

His vision is that discussions generated by GIN-Asia will help Asian countries focus on what they can do to create jobs and improve their economies. "We should focus on establishing a network in Asia," he says, "identifying lead institutions in each country, and creating a regular way of communicating with each other." In addition, Prof. Salazar notes, "I saw at the GIN conference a mechanism by which we can bring these groups together, and in the process, come out with obtainable, realistic objectives ... all the while moving, of course, towards having a better environment for the country and our people." ♦

**Below: Participants at the conference make a toast to the new GIN chapter in Asia.**

