



APEC NEWS RELEASE Issued by **The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC)**

ABAC Launches 2026 Work Program Under Theme “Openness, Connectivity, Synergy”

Jakarta, 9 February - The APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) today formally launched its 2026 work program under the theme **“Openness, Connectivity, Synergy,”** reaffirming the Asia-Pacific business community’s commitment to open markets, deeper regional integration, and collaborative innovation as foundations for sustainable economic growth.

This meeting marks the first of four ABAC meetings in 2026 and sets the strategic direction for the year, focusing on practical, business-driven solutions to strengthen regional resilience and its long-term prosperity.

ABAC Chair Li Fanrong emphasized the importance of the theme in the current global environment. “In a time of growing uncertainty and fragmentation, the Asia-Pacific business community is united in its call for openness, stronger connectivity, and deeper synergy,” he said. “These principles are not abstract ideals — they are practical imperatives for sustaining growth, strengthening supply chains, and ensuring the region continues to serve as a driver of global economic prosperity.”

Openness: Reinforcing the Foundations of Growth

Openness remains central to the Asia-Pacific’s economic success, achieved through trade and investment liberalization and facilitation that is enabled by robust, resilient and open economic architecture. The global rules-based trading system, including a reformed World Trade Organization (WTO), is central to this. ABAC will continue to develop ideas to unlock progress toward our shared vision of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). ABAC will also put forward actions to promote equal access to opportunities, including through its voluntary Equal Pay Framework for business, and addressing non-tariff barriers. ABAC looks to equip economies to use digital technology to facilitate trade for a green, digital and services-driven future, enabling the continued growth of digitally-delivered services trade and making permanent the e-commerce moratorium.

Connectivity: Strengthening Integration and Resilience

Connectivity is essential to the stability and efficiency of regional industrial and supply chains. The APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015–2025, has provided the impetus for the Asia-Pacific to achieve meaningful progress in infrastructure connectivity, regulatory coordination, and people-to-people exchanges.

ABAC will develop practical recommendations to enhance physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity to enable the seamless flow of goods, services, information, technology, and talent across the region.

Synergy: Driving Innovation and Sustainable Development

Synergy is the engine of innovation and sustainable growth in the Asia-Pacific. Rapid economic expansion driven by technological change is reshaping industries and economic models, while placing greater strain on infrastructure and the environment. Practical cooperation across economies and industries is critical.

ABAC will advance cross-economy and cross-sector cooperation in technology and innovation, with a focus on accelerating AI adoption in traditional sectors, navigating the implications of digital currencies, assessing of the state of quantum commercial progress and readiness in the region, and strengthening awareness of both the opportunities and challenges presented by a rapidly evolving digital landscape. ABAC aims to provide a roadmap for realizing technology's productive potential, while ensuring the benefits of technological progress are widely shared across the region.

Collaboration is also central to advancing resilient, inclusive and low-carbon growth. ABAC's work this year will advance pragmatic, investment-oriented and business-led solutions that strengthen resilience and deliver tangible outcomes. Priorities include reinforcing food security and sustainable agriculture, enabling smarter and more inclusive healthcare systems with a focus on workforce resilience and access, promoting sustainable and responsible mining as a key enabler of the energy transition, and supporting energy transitions that are just, ambitious, and realistic.

Aligning Business and Policy Agendas

During the meeting, ABAC also held a dialogue with APEC Senior Officials, reinforcing the importance of close alignment between the business community and policymakers. The exchange focused on ensuring synergy between ABAC's recommendations and APEC's broader work program, strengthening policy coherence and maximizing the impact of collective efforts to drive regional growth.

"Close coordination between business leaders and policymakers is essential," Chair Li noted. "Our dialogue with APEC Senior Officials reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that policy frameworks and business priorities move forward together."

His Excellency, Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of Indonesia, delivered the keynote address.

Chairman Li Fanrong thanked ABAC Indonesia for hosting the Meeting and for the excellent arrangements. ABAC Indonesia is led by Mr. Anindya Novyan Bakrie, with members Ms. Shinta Kamdani and Mr. Kartika Wirjoatmodjo.

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.

Under China's leadership, ABAC is pursuing a work program under the theme "Openness. Connectivity. Synergy." to respond to the challenge of maintaining the economic vitality of the Asia-Pacific Region and ensure it benefits all.

ABAC 2026 Chair is Li Fanrong (China) and the Co-Chairs are Kynho Lee (Korea) and Ho Sy Hung (Viet Nam), with four (4) working group chairs and one (1) task force chair, namely: Anna Curzon, Regional Economic Integration Working Group (REIWG); Julia Torreblanca, Sustainability Working Group (SWG); Jan De Silva, Digital and Innovation Working Group (DIWG); Zeng Qi, Connectivity Working Group (CWG); and Mitsubishi Furusawa, Finance and Economics Task Force (FETF).

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