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Thailand Leads ASEAN ESG Strategy Amid Global Challenges

Considering escalating global instability, encompassing geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and the accelerating climate crisis, the ESG Symposium 2025 convened Thailand's leading corporate, financial, and governmental actors to chart a pragmatic path toward sustainable development. Under the theme "Green Breakthrough Amid the Perfect Storm," the Symposium emphasized the necessity of a distinct ASEAN approach to sustainability—one that is homegrown, collaborative, and sensitive to regional economic and institutional realities.

The Symposium highlighted key initiatives that demonstrate the intersection of law, policy, and corporate governance in advancing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) compliance. SCG's Saraburi Sandbox, the "Go Together" program for SMEs, and the Net Zero Accelerator Program 2025 illustrate the legal and regulatory mechanisms underpinning public-private partnerships, low-carbon industrial development, and capacity building for small and medium enterprises. These programs provide concrete examples of how corporate compliance with ESG obligations can be structured within Thailand's legal framework, while also fostering regional and international recognition.

The Bank of Thailand, underscored that ASEAN's path must diverge from advanced economies' models due to fundamental disparities in infrastructure, institutional capacity, and workforce composition. Legal and regulatory strategies must prioritize "lower disruption" and adaptation, balancing mitigation with pragmatic pathways that account for climate vulnerabilities and socioeconomic realities. Initiatives such as the development of a Thailand Taxonomy for high-emitting sectors, flood risk stress tests, and banking programs facilitating transitions from "brown to less brown" industries exemplify regulatory innovation and legally guided financial mechanisms to achieve net-zero targets.

Corporate actors further reinforced the legal and ethical responsibilities of private entities to pursue multi-pathway strategies—incorporating hybrid, plug-in hybrid, fuel-cell, and hydrogen technologies—ensuring that sustainability obligations do not compromise social equity, accessibility, or local infrastructure realities. Complementary perspectives from international organizations and academic institutions emphasized the necessity of participatory, inclusive approaches that integrate community engagement, climate risk management, and economic fairness into ESG compliance frameworks.

Collectively, the Symposium reinforced that ASEAN's sustainable development must be guided by law, policy, and governance that promote pragmatic, inclusive, and context-specific solutions. Legal and regulatory frameworks, corporate compliance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration form the foundation for achieving a green breakthrough, demonstrating Thailand's commitment to a sustainable, low-carbon future amid global uncertainty.