



**Mr. Jonathan Alles**  
**ABA Chairman, 2018-2021**



## MESSAGE

It has certainly been an honor and a privilege for me and Hatton National Bank to have served as Chairman of this distinguished group of bankers from the region.

Indeed, we strongly support ABA's vision of promoting cooperation among banks in the region and advancing the interests of the Asian banking sector. We are committed to its objective of providing a forum for an effective exchange of information and networking among its members. Above all, we believe in the capacity of ABA to serve as a vehicle for member banks to develop long-term relationship and friendship, which is the binding force that will make the Association grow stronger in the years to come.

I wish to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to all who have helped me in performing my duties and responsibilities since taking over this position in 2018. My deepest gratitude goes to the members of the Advisory Council and the ABA Board of Directors for their wisdom and all the valuable suggestions and recommendations you have provided. I am deeply grateful to the general membership for your kind cooperation and support for the projects and programs that my administration had undertaken over the past three years.

I also convey my words of appreciation to members of the Policy Advocacy Committee and to the Secretariat for the support that they have provided during my term, thereby making my job easier.

All your cooperative endeavors - which have been the hallmark of ABA - have certainly made my task as Chairman more worthwhile, rewarding, and enjoyable in so many levels, thereby providing me with a memorable three-year tenure. Without your collaboration, the various programs that we set out to do at the start of my term would not have been achieved.

Given the rapid changes taking place in the economic and financial environment not only in the region but globally as well, the role of ABA as a regional organization and as the voice of the banking sector will become increasingly important. I, therefore, call on all member banks to give our incoming Chairman, incoming Vice Chairman and the new Board members our continued support and cooperation in the next two years.

Thank you once again for the honor of your confidence and for all your most valued support. I hope to continue seeing all of you in future ABA activities.

# INSTALLATION CEREMONY

35TH ABA GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE  
November 18, 2018, Maldives

Mr. Jonathan Alles was installed as ABA Chairman during the 35th ABA General Meeting and Conference held on November 16, 2018 in Maldives.

Following are excerpts from his Acceptance Speech: “The ABA Chairmanship carries with it enormous responsibility and challenges. My predecessors have done very well in keeping the Association dynamic and progressive, and I hope to be able to follow their footsteps and do my part in contributing to the growth of ABA.

“Recognizing that the ongoing changes in the world market continue to have a significant impact on the region’s financial sector, I realize I have a daunting task ahead of me. As we’ve heard from our speakers earlier today, the banking sector has entered a period of many new challenges and opportunities.

A number of developments taking place in many of the advanced economies are having significant implications on Asia’s financial markets and the global economy as a whole.

“I am therefore counting on your continued support and call on you to play an active part in the Association. Together, we will do our best to make ABA an effective forum for advancing the cause of the banking sector and for promoting regional economic cooperation. I believe we are in a position to do just that, given the vast and rich resources our membership can provide. I am confident that with the constant support of all officers and members, we can look forward to more years of greater cooperation and understanding among banks in the region. “



# CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF JONATHAN ALLES

2018-2019

## 56th ABA Board of Directors' Meeting

Mr. Jonathan Alles chaired the 56th ABA Board of Directors' Meeting – the first Board meeting he presided as ABA Chairman – held on 16 November 2018 in Maldives. Among others, the Board meeting approved the ABA Work Program for 2019-2020, and created the 2019 ABA Planning Committee tasked with making preparations for the 36th ABA General Meeting and Conference.



- I. **Preparations for the 36th ABA General Meeting and Conference**
  - A. Planning Committee Meeting

The 2019 ABA Planning Committee Meeting was held on May 17, 2019 at Shangri-la Hotel in Makati City, Philippines, with the Philippine National Bank (PNB) as host organization.

Presided by ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles, the meeting was attended by 19 representatives of 8 banks from 7 countries, including Austria, India, Iran, Maldives, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan. The Planning Committee discussed: (a) Preparations for the 36th ABA General Meeting and Conference, with the deliberations focusing on the final dates and venue, themes and topics for the Conference, line-up of possible speakers, and suggested format and program; (b) The progress of the various activities and projects outlined under the ABA 2018-2020 Work Program and suggestions for their effective implementation; and (c) The Work Program for 2019 of the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee.

After the meeting, members of the ABA Planning Committee led by ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles, were accompanied by PNB President and CEO Mr. Wick Veloso and other Bank officers in meeting with Deputy Governor Mrs. Chuchi Fonacier of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the country's central bank, on the afternoon of May 17 at the premises of the BSP. Mr. Alles invited Deputy Governor Fonacier to join the 36th ABA General Meeting and Conference in November 2019 hosted by PNB, and requested her to encourage other Philippine banks to participate in this important event and join the discussion on timely and relevant issues that would be addressed at the Conference.



## II. Policy Advocacy

The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee held its first meeting for 2019 on May 17 in Makati City, in conjunction with the Planning Committee Meeting. Chaired by Mr. Dilshan Rodrigo, Chief Operating Officer of Hatton National Bank, who participated from Sri Lanka via teleconference, the meeting discussed and approved the Committee's Work Program for 2019 with the following objectives:

- a. Promoting Cooperation in Cyber Security Management
- b. Promoting cooperation in achieving the rapid adoption of new financial technologies and attaining greater understanding of its implications for, and potential impact on, the financial industry
- c. Promoting cooperation in Islamic Banking
- d. Promoting greater understanding and sharing of the implementation results in the area of KYC/AML/CFT compliance
- e. Encouraging cooperation among member banks in promoting blended financing, and
- f. Encouraging cooperation among member banks in promoting digital transformation



### III. Training Programs

#### A. Short-term Visiting Program

The ABA coordinated with a number of member banks and other strategic partner organizations on the possibility of hosting short - term visiting programs for members in 2019 aimed at providing participants the opportunity to undergo training on specific aspects of the operations of the more advanced host organizations.

The member banks and strategic partner organizations that agreed to host short-term visiting programs for members in 2019 included the following:

- a. The **Fintelekt Advisory Services (Fintelekt)** hosted a short-term visiting program on “**Best Practices in AML/CFT Governance and Operations**” in Mumbai, India on March 7-9, 2019. The program provided the participants the opportunity to gain an overview of AML/CFT governance standards and operations across different types of banking business models, and be updated on new trends and advancements in AML/CFT technology. A total of 13 bankers from six countries attended the three-day program.
- b. The **Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC)** hosted, jointly with its microfinance arm Rizal Microbank, a Microfinance workshop on June 10-11, 2019 in Makati City. The primary objective of the workshop was to provide ABA member banks, particularly those who are interested to engage in microfinance as a business initiative, the opportunity to learn from the experience, best practices, and expertise of RCBC and Rizal Microbank. A total of 13 participants from six countries (Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan) attended the workshop.

- c. **The Malayan Banking Berhad (Maybank)** once again hosted another short-term visiting program for ABA members on October 1-2, 2019 at the Maybank Academy located in Bangi Selangor. Attended by a total of 29 participants from seven Asian countries, the two-day course covered the following topics: (1) Workplace Futurization in Maybank; (2) Succession and talent development in banking; (3) Bankers’ ready skills areas for today and tomorrow; (4) Learning and Development; and (5) Agility at work.



B. ABA-Fintelekt AML/CFT Webinar Series 2019

The ABA and the Fintelekt Advisory Services agreed to hold the AML/CFT Webinar Series 2019 over the four quarters of 2019. The four webinars – lasting one hour each – were designed to address key AML/CFT challenges within Asia.

The webinars – which were successfully held on February 21, May 8, July 10 and December 4 – focused on “The Role of AML Compliance in Correspondent Banking”, “Why Continuous Monitoring is Critical for Trade-Based Money Laundering”, and “Customer Due Diligence : Challenges and Best Practices”, and “New Payment Systems and Inherent AML Risks,” respectively.

C. ABA-Fintelekt Asia AML/CFT Summit

The ABA agreed to be an event partner in the first regional Asia AML/CFT Summit held on September 11-12, 2019 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Organized by Fintelekt Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd., the Asia AML/CFT Summit provided the participants the opportunity to understand, deliberate on and discuss important issues on Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT). The two-day Summit brought together some 130 AML/CFT professionals and other stakeholders engaged in AML and CFT from across Asia.



D. ACRAA Training Workshop

The Association of Credit Rating Agencies in Asia (ACRAA) invited ABA members to participate in the training workshop on “Advanced Analysis of Infrastructure Projects: Energy, Tollways” held on July 25-26, 2019 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The two-day program was designed for credit rating analysts, bank analysts, investment analysts who are involved in infrastructure projects as project developer, project evaluator, project financier, project implementor, or project regulatory overseer.



#### IV. Accreditation of ABA as Guest Association at the 52nd ADB Annual Meeting held in Fiji

The ABA was once again accredited as Guest Association at the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held on May 2-5, 2019 in Fiji. As in previous years, the ADB meeting in Fiji gathered more than 3,000 registered delegates from some 70 countries, including representatives of ABA member banks and the ABA Secretariat.



#### V. ABA Participation in the Symposium on Asian Banking and Finance

The ABA was invited to send a representative to the 2019 Symposium on Asian Banking and Finance jointly organized and hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (FRBSF) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) on June 3-4, 2019 in Singapore. This year's gathering brought together some 110 participants including central bankers and regulators, senior officers of financial institutions, market participants, and academics. The theme of the 2019 Symposium reflected the impact of banking services on the function and wellbeing of society. Discussions covered regulatory reform, financial inclusion, sustainable financing, technological advancements, and cyber resiliency.



## VI. ABA Participation in the 2019 IIF Membership Meeting

The ABA was invited to attend the 2019 Membership Meeting of the Institute of International Finance (IIF) held on June 6-7 in Tokyo, Japan. It was the first time that IIF invited the ABA to join this annual event. Immediate Past ABA Chairman and then Chairman of the ABA Advisory Council Mr. Daniel Wu attended the Meeting as ABA's representative. A meeting was arranged by IIF between Mr. Wu and IIF officers led by Ms. Loren Bushkar, Managing Director, Global Membership Department.



## VII. ABA Participation in the ACRAA Conference Held in Shanghai

ABA members were invited to attend the “China’s Capital Market Conference” organized by the Association of Credit Rating Agencies in Asia (ACRAA) on September 5, 2019 in Shanghai, China. Focusing on the theme “Opportunities for Foreign Investors in an Open China Bond Market”, the one-day Conference aimed to explore the opportunities for both international issuers and investors in the China market, as well as to enable China’s issuers and investors to benefit from their exposure to international capital markets. ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles was invited to be one of the panelists in the Conference. The topic for Mr. Alles’ panel was “Exploring the Roles of Domestic Credit Rating Agencies and ACRAA in Facilitating Cross-Border Investment.” Mr. Alles was requested to share his views on the challenges in risk management for international exposure, especially the need of foreign credit assessment and monitoring.



## VIII. 36th ABA General Meeting and Conference

Some 180 bankers from Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and other regions - composed mainly of members of the Asian Bankers Association (ABA) led by ABA Chairman **Mr. Jonathan Alles**, Managing Director and CEO of Hatton National Bank from Sri Lanka - gathered in Makati, Philippines on November 14-15, 2019 for the 36th ABA General Meeting and Conference. Hosted and organized by Philippine National Bank (PNB) under the leadership of its President and CEO **Mr. Wick Veloso**, the 2019 ABA gathering was held at Makati Shangri-la Hotel.

Focusing on the theme **“Reshaping the Asian Financial Landscape”**, the two-day event provided another valuable platform for ABA members and invited speakers to meet and network with each other and to exchange views on: (a) current trends and developments in the regional and global markets that are expected to have a significant impact on the banking and financial sector of the region, and (b) how industry players can address the challenges - and take full advantage of the opportunities - presented by these developments.

The Keynote Speech was delivered by Mr. Peter B. Favila, Monetary Board Member, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and concurrently member of the ABA Advisory Council, who spoke on the topic **“Paradigm Shifts and Economic Gains.”**

ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles in his Opening Statement said that the ABA Conference was being held at a time of profound and complex changes in the economic and financial landscape, with world economic growth weighed down by factors such as sluggish international trade and investment, rising protectionism, and the continuing trade war between major economies such as the US and China. Amidst these developments, Mr. Alles stressed the importance of business networking to encourage greater interaction among individual bankers and banking sectors in the Asian region and called on the ABA to play a significant role going forward.



The Conference consisted of four Plenary Sessions that featured eminent speakers from both government and the private sector who shared their views and insights on the following timely and relevant topics:

- (a) **“Global Economic Outlook: What Lies Ahead for Asian Banks”** - Invited experts and panelists shared their valuable perspectives and insights on key factors shaping the global economy in the year ahead, the risks and opportunities offered by these factors, and what their implications are for banks and their business strategies.
- (b) **“Financial Inclusion: Banking the MSMEs.”** - Invited speakers and panelists examined how banks can harness technology for deeper and wider financial inclusion, how governments in the region can put in place legal framework and regulatory mechanisms to facilitate the empowerment of MSMEs, and how banks can initiate more inclusive institutional partnerships to make MSMEs commercially sustainable.



- (c) **“Is Asia Ready to Go Cashless?”** - Experts elaborated on their views on the benefits of the rapidly rising Internet and smartphone penetration and their implications for society on one hand, and the costs in terms of the loss of privacy and the risk of fraud of cybercrime, on the other; what governments in the region are doing to enable them to rapidly advance towards the use of electronic cash; and whether Asia is ready to become a truly cashless society in the foreseeable future.
  
- (d) **“The Role of Regulator in Developing an Effective Digital Ecosystem”** - Representatives from government and the private sector examined various issues resulting from the development of digital banking and how they are currently being addressed by the banking sector and, more importantly, by regulatory and supervisory authorities.



As in previous years, the two-day event also featured the following sessions: (a) **“Discover ABA” session**; (b) **Host Bank Session**; and (c) **Special Presentations Session**. The ABA also convened a meeting of the **ABA Policy Advocacy Committee** during which a number of ABA member banks and ABA Knowledge Partners presented papers on various policy issues of current concern to ABA members. The **57th ABA Board of Directors' Meeting** was also held to discuss internal policy issues and took action on a number of important matters.



During the Gala Dinner, the ABA presented an Award to the best presentation made during the “Discover ABA “ session. The Award was won by Mr. Raymundo Roxas, President of Rizal Microbank, the micro finance arm of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, who made a presentation on “RCBC’s Experience in Microfinance. “



## 2020

The year 2020 was a period of unprecedented challenges for the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole. The COVID-19 pandemic was considered a global threat that the world was not prepared to deal with, generating significant instability and great uncertainties not only on people's daily lives but also on their businesses and respective economies.

The ABA was not spared by the massive impact of the pandemic. Several of its planned gatherings and training programs were re-scheduled, re-formatted, or indefinitely postponed until the health crisis is declared as safely over. Its day-to-day activities needed also to be re-thought to deal with the changes and challenges caused by the pandemic.

Hence, the main concern of the ABA and its officers in 2020 was how to continue to serve and remain relevant and of value to its members under the year's extraordinary circumstances. It focused its attention on dealing with questions such as: (a) How to bring members together during the period when congregating in person is not possible; (b) How to assist them as they faced almost identical challenges across the region; (c) How to assist the Association in dealing with some of the important issues ahead during these difficult times; (d) What the impact the current situation has had on the Association and the critical things its members can do together to see this through; (e) How to maintain communications with its members to keep them intact and informed; and (f) How to move forward into the future.



With these thoughts in mind, the ABA undertook activities in 2020 – under the leadership of ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles - aimed at further enhancing the value of the Association to its members and the Asian banking sector as a whole. Conceptualized and implemented with the valuable guidance and support of ABA officers and member banks, the activities of the Association in 2020 were as follows:

## I. Suggestions on Policy Issues to be Addressed by the ABA in 2020

The ABA Secretariat in early January 2020 solicited suggestions from ABA Board Members and ABA members on policy issues that the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee may want to address as part of its Work Program for 2020. Members' suggestions were later considered by the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee during its meeting held on February 28 in conjunction with the ABA Planning Committee Meeting in Negombo, Sri Lanka.



## II. ABA Planning Committee Meeting in Negombo, Sri Lanka

Members of the 2020 ABA Planning Committee met on February 28, 2020 at Jetwing Blue Hotel in Negombo, Sri Lanka, with the Hatton National Bank (HNB) as host organization. Presided by ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles, Managing Director and CEO of HNB, the meeting was attended by 13 representatives of 5 banks from 5 countries, including India, Maldives, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan. Its primary agenda was to discuss preparations for the upcoming 37th ABA General Meeting and Conference, as well as to review the 2020 Work Program of the ABA, particularly the activities of the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee for the year.



The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Dilshan Rodrigo, Chief Operating Officer of Hatton National Bank, approved its Work Program for 2020 during the meeting.

After the Planning Committee Meeting, members of the ABA Planning Committee led by ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles and other HNB officers made a courtesy call on the Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Professor W.D. Lakshman – along with four other Central Bank officials - on the afternoon of February 28 at the premises of the Central Bank in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



### III. Online Meeting of ABA Chairman with the ABA Secretariat

ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles, and ABA Policy Advocacy Committee Chairman Mr. Dilshan Rodrigo, Chief Operating Officer of HNB, conducted a videoconference with the officers and staff of the ABA Secretariat on June 19, 2020. It was the first time that Mr. Alles and Mr. Rodrigo held such a virtual meeting with the Secretariat officers and staff, mainly to discuss the activities that the ABA could undertake during the Covid-19 pandemic and thereafter.



Among the items that were discussed during the June 19 videoconference included: (a) the proposed dates and venue for the 37th ABA General Meeting and Conference, which was originally scheduled to take place on November 12-13, 2020 in Negombo, Sri Lanka but later postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic; (b) status of membership fee payments; (c) schedule of upcoming webinars organized by ABA Knowledge Partners and offered for free to ABA member banks; (d) proposal for the ABA to conduct its own webinars over the next few months on topics of current interest to members and featuring panelists from selected member banks; and (e) the introduction of a dedicated section in the ABA website as a platform for ABA members to share information, experiences and best practices with other members, colleagues, associates, and the public in general.

#### IV. Joint Training Programs with Fintelekt Advisory Services

The ABA collaborated with India-based Fintelekt Advisory Services, a specialist in research, training and advisory on Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) in Asia, in conducting a number of training programs for ABA members. These included the following:



##### Short-Term Visiting Program on AML/CFT in Mumbai

Fintelekt Advisory Services and the Asian Bankers Association jointly hosted the second Short-term Visiting Program on “Making AML/CFT Top Priority for Banks” in Mumbai, India on February 27-28, 2020. The objective of the programme was to provide compliance officers of banks around the region with a strategic understanding of emerging risk factors and an opportunity to enhance and upgrade their management skills and knowledge in the area of AML/CFT.



### Webinar on AML and Sanctions Compliance and Enforcement

The ABA and Fintelekt Advisory Services held a webinar on “AML and Sanctions Compliance and Enforcement” on May 6, 2020 from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon (India time). The seminar was part of **the AML/CFT Webinar Series 2020** jointly organized by the ABA and Fintelekt in 2020.



### Webinar on Ultimate Beneficial Ownership Identification Challenges; Challenges and Best Practices

Fintelekt Advisory Services and ABA jointly presented a webinar on “Ultimate Beneficial Ownership Identification: Challenges and Best Practices” on June 10, 2020. The webinar had close to 800 registrations from over 35 countries.

### Webinar on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risks in Correspondent Banking

Fintelekt Advisory Services and ABA jointly presented the webinar in the 2020 series on **Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risks in Correspondent Banking** on July 8, 2020.



### Asia AML/CFT 2nd Annual Summit

Fintelekt’s Asia AML/CFT 2nd Annual Summit 2020 was held virtually from July 20-24, 2020. The summit concluded with more than 1200 participants joining in from 48 countries in Asia and beyond. Global AML/CFT experts shared their knowledge and insights with participants over the five days of the summit. A variety of topics pertaining to AML/CFT and financial crime were discussed, with the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact being the underlying theme through the discussions.

### Webinar on Fine-Tuning AML Transaction Monitoring

Fintelekt Advisory Services and ABA jointly presented the webinar in the 2020 series on **Fine-Tuning AML Transaction Monitoring** on August 5, 2020.

### Webinar on Optimizing AML Screening

Fintelekt Advisory Services and ABA jointly presented a webinar on Optimizing AML Screening on September 9, 2020. The panelists discussed the risks vs operational effectiveness, challenges around false positives, efficiency and effectiveness and offered practical advice for screening and list management.



### Webinar on Risk Sensing and Fraud Intelligence

Fintelekt Advisory Services and ABA co-presented the webinar on **Risk Sensing and Fraud Intelligence** in the 2020 Webinar series on November 18, 2020. The webinar had close to 700 registrations from over 45 countries.



## V. **ABA Webinar on “Managing Business Continuity and Recovery During COVID-19 and Beyond”, July 29, 2020**

The webinar – the first-ever organized by the Asian Bankers Association (ABA) – featured representatives of selected ABA member banks who shared their views on the following issues:

- The impact of the pandemic on their respective economies.
- What the bankers and government authorities in their country are doing to mitigate the impact on their economy and the financial industry.

- What measures are currently being set in place as part of efforts to put back the economy and the banking industry on the road to recovery.
- What their organizations are doing to assess their risk and vulnerability from both an operational and financial standpoint.
- What actions are they taking to mitigate risks and plan for recovery scenarios and associated impacts on liquidity.
- How are their organizations achieving business transition towards digitalization as part of its effort to adapt to the “new normal.”

The webinar aimed to provide the participants the opportunity to explore what the new normal might look like and prepare for it, to better understand the current landscape they are operating in, and to know what they need to do to resume operations and achieve business recovery.



## VI. ABA Webinar on “Strengthening Cybersecurity Preparedness for Banks”

With the world of finance becoming increasingly digitized, banks can expect to come under a growing threat from cyber-attacks. In 2020, the trend seemed to have been exacerbated by the rapid worldwide spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Criminals are exploiting vulnerabilities opened up by the COVID-19 lockdown, increasing the risks of cyber-attacks.

Focusing on the topic “**Strengthening Cybersecurity Preparedness for Banks**”, the webinar – the second one organized by the Asian Bankers Association with the support of Hatton National Bank (HNB) – aimed to help ABA members to explore how banks and financial institutions can find ways to protect their businesses from emerging cyber risks, as everyone – from large corporations to small businesses – is a potential target for hackers.

The two-hour webinar featured six speakers who addressed the following issues:

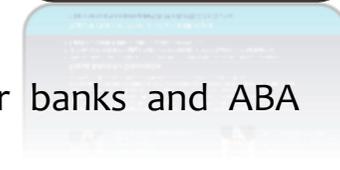
- (a) Cyber risk regulation and supervision
- (b) Cyber Resilience, COVID-19 Response and the “New Normal”
- (c) CISO and its criticality in managing the bank’s cyber related risks
- (d) Training and capacity building for staff and customers on cyber risks;
- (e) Bringing Intelligence to Cybersecurity Management
- (f) Cyber Risk Insurance: Pros and Cons

## VII. ABA Policy Advocacy Committee Meeting

The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee held its second meeting for 2020 on November 13, 2020 in an online format as it was not possible to hold a face-to-face discussion due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The main agenda of the meeting was to consider position papers on policy issues which had been decided by the Committee to be the focus of the policy work of ABA for 2020 at its first meeting for the year on February 28, 2020 in Negombo, Sri Lanka.

The position papers presented by representatives of ABA member banks and ABA Knowledge partners focused on the following topics:

- (a) **Promoting Cooperation in Crisis & Disaster Preparedness and Recovery** presented by Christina Alvarez, Senior Vice President and Head of Corporate Planning Group at Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC);
- (b) **From Risk to Resilience: The Need for Asian Banks to Comprehensively Address Physical Climate Risks**, presented by Dr. Adrian Fenton, Vice President, Asia Sustainable Finance at the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Singapore;



- (c) **Promoting Cooperation in Collaborating with Fintech Companies** presented by Lionel Ho Tze-Kuang, Head, Digital Strategy, GS-Group, Digital at Maybank;
- (d) **Exploring the LIBOR Transition After 2021 and Its Implications for Banks**, presented by Oliver Hoffmann, Managing Director, Head of Asia, Erste Group Bank AG;
- (e) **Promoting Cooperation on Cyber Security Management** presented by Eric Wong, Group Information Officer, General Manager, Head of Technology and Productivity Division at The Bank of East Asia Ltd., and
- (f) **Cyber Security Preparedness** prepared by Suresh Emmanuel, HNB Chief Information Security Officer.



## VIII. Participation in Webinars Conducted by Other ABA Knowledge Partners

ABA forwarded to ABA members the invitation to join webinars organized by ABA Knowledge Partners and other associate organizations. By joining forces with its Knowledge Partners, ABA hoped to provide its members the opportunity to connect online with their colleagues from other organizations.

## IX. Webinar on WEBINT for KYC with Sqope

The ABA and Sqope S.A. successfully conducted a webinar on “WEBINT for KYC” on November 26, 2020 at 3:00 PM, Taipei time. Sqope S.A. is a global provider of high-quality intelligence reports on individuals and corporate entities, tailored to the needs of the financial sector. It was the first collaboration between the two organizations in providing training on a topic of current interest to ABA members and other bankers and industry practitioners.

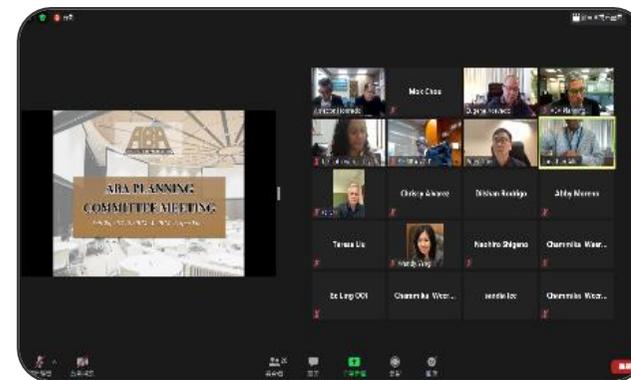
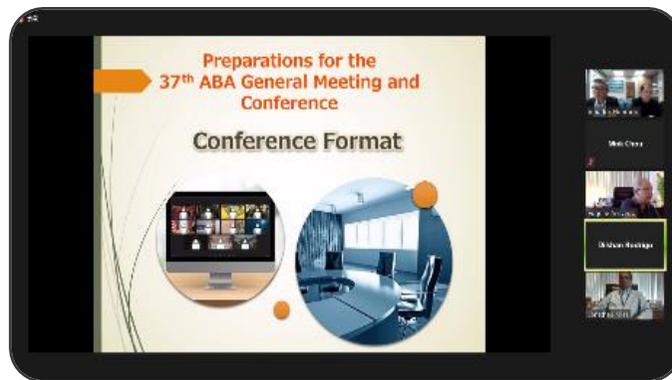


2021

## I. 2021 ABA Planning Committee Meeting

The 2021 ABA Planning Committee met online on February 25, 2021, from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Taipei Time. The meeting aimed to once again discuss again preparations for the 37<sup>th</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference, since the Conference – which was originally scheduled to take place in November 12-13, 2020 in Negombo, Sri Lanka – had to be re-scheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among the issues discussed by the meeting were the new dates of the Conference, the format (whether face-to-face or virtual), the theme and topics (whether those decided earlier during the previous Planning Committee Meeting held on February 28, 2020 in Negombo are still relevant or need to be amended), and the dates and format of the 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> ABA Board of Directors meetings. Presided by ABA Chairman Mr. Jonathan Alles, the meeting was attended by ABA Board members and representatives of ABA member organizations.



## II. Virtual First Meeting of the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee for 2021

The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee held its first meeting for 2021 on March 26, 2021, from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm, Taipei time. It was still in an online format as the ongoing Covid-19 situation remained precarious, making face-to-face discussion still not advisable.

The main agenda of the meeting was to consider position papers on policy issues that were earlier decided by the Committee at its second meeting for 2020 held virtually on November 13, 2020 .

The following position papers were presented by representatives of ABA member banks and ABA Knowledge partners. Both ABA members and non-members were invited to participate in the online meeting, as the papers to be presented were deemed to be of current interest to bankers in general:

(a) **“HNB’s Experience Driving Business Revival Post-Covid in MSME Sector”**

**Mr. K. Indravan,** Head of SME Banking at Hatton National Bank (HNB), presented a paper sharing the experience of HNB in its efforts to help strengthen supply chain linkages of its customers, particularly the MSMEs and the SMEs, and to support their digitalization transformation.

(b) **“From Interbank Offered Rates to Risk-Free Rates: Update”**

**Mr. Oliver Hoffmann,** Managing Director, Head of Asia, Erste Group Bank AG, presented a summary of a paper on the LIBOR scenario, touching mainly on how banks can adapt to the new environment.

(c) **“Long-Term Decarbonisation Planning for Banks”**

**Dr. Adrian Fenton**, Vice President, Asia Sustainable Finance, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Singapore, presented a paper on the need for cooperation in promoting decarbonized portfolio among ABA member banks in line with national efforts to address the issue of climate change.



(d) **“Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Transformation**

**Mr. Friedman Wang**, Executive Vice President, Division Head, Financial Technology Development Center, Data Intelligence R&D Division, CTBC Bank Co. Ltd. presented a paper sharing his perspectives on how ABA member banks can collaborate with each other in their common journey towards a digitalized environment.

(e) **“Maintaining the Spotlight on AML/CFT in the Post-Covid19 World”**

**Mr. Shirish Pathak**, Managing Director, Fintelekt Advisory Services, presented a paper providing recommendations for AML compliance professionals within member banks to assume leadership role within the bank, becoming more and more valuable as true advisors internally.

### III. Training Programs

Fintelekt Webinars on AML/CFT

The ABA, in association with Fintelekt Advisory Services, continued to conduct webinars as part of the AML/CFT Webinar Series that was started in February 2019.

The joint ABA-Fintelekt webinars conducted in 2021 included the following:

- Feb. 3, 2021 - Prioritising AML/CFT Training
- Mar. 3, 2021 - Conducting enterprise-wide AML/CFTrisk assessments
- April 7, 2021 - Future-proofing your FCC Screening
- May 5, 2021 - “Cultural Landscape of AML compliance”
- June 22, 2021 - Assessing the Impact of the FATF on Financial Inclusion”
- July 5-9, 2021 - AML/CFT Asia 3rd Annual Summit

Webinars with Other Partners

The ABA also conducted webinars jointly with other ABA Knowledge Partners:

March 3	Oberthur Cash Protection	Intelligent Banknote Neutralization System (IBNS)
March 24	Association of Credit Rating Agencies in Asia (ACRAA)	A greener, better ne normal post pandemic
April 13	Ernst&Young	Environmental Risk Management
April 28-29	Magenta Global	12th Money Mobile & Financial Inclusion Virtual Summit 2021”
May 20	BlackArrow Conferences	Blockchain in Banking
June 9	Temenos	Is your bank experiencing digital fatigue? Powering through the noise to become the Best digital bank
June 22	Temenos	Digital banking and the future of money: Impact of an increasingly cashless society
August 13	Association of Credit Rating Agencies in Asia (ACRAA)	Recent Developments in the Japanese and Taiwanese Capital Markets

## IV. 37th ABA General Meeting and Conference

Some 1,000 representatives from banks, regulatory authorities, multilateral financial organization, the academe, and bank service providers registered for the 37th ABA Conference held virtually on 24-27 August 2021. It was the first annual gathering of the ABA conducted in an online format due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Carrying the theme **“Asian Banks: Achieving Sustainable Growth in the New Normal”**, the four-day event featured Industry experts and bank regulators who shared their views on a number of important topics, including: **“Responding to Challenges and Disruptions in a Changing Global Ecosystem,”** **“The Role of Technology in Sustainable Growth,”** **“Current Banking Trends and Their Implications on regulatory Policies,”** and **“Navigating the New World Order.”**

ABA Chairman **Mr. Jonathan Alles**, Managing Director and CEO of Hatton National Bank (HNB) from Sri Lanka, gave the Welcome Remarks, and **Mr. In Joon Hwang**, Chairman of Line Bank Taiwan, delivered the Keynote Address during the Opening Ceremony on August 24.

Session One, which followed immediately after the Opening Ceremony, focused on the topic **“Responding to Challenges and Disruptions in a Changing Global Ecosystem.”** Invited economists and experts shared their narratives on the challenges and disruptions brought about by the pandemic on their respective communities, and their efforts to find innovative solutions to adapt in the so-called new normal that has emerged from the pandemic.



Focusing on the topic **“The Role of Technology in Sustainable Growth,”** Session Two was held on August 25 and featured speakers and panelists who pointed out that the emergence of new technologies has presented opportunities to make banking more innovative, more efficient, more inclusive, less costly, more supportive of small business, and more responsive to the changing needs of customers. They provided their views and perspectives on how technology enables sophisticated product development, better market infrastructure, implementation of reliable techniques for control of risks, and helps the financial intermediaries reach geographically distant and diversified markets.



Held on August 26, Session Three featured government regulators and other experts who addressed the topic **“Current Banking Trends and Their Implications on Regulatory Policies”**. The speakers and panelists expounded on their efforts in reviewing their own supervisory processes and reinforcing the core bank supervisory pillars of governance, risk management, capital adequacy and planning, liquidity management, and compliance with laws and regulations in response to the rapid changes in the banking and finance industry, and what their impact is on the industry in the years ahead.



Held on August 27, Session Four was a CEO Roundtable on **“Navigating the New World Order”**. It featured CEOs and other high-level experts who shared their experiences and views on their efforts to reinvent their organizations in order to mitigate the impact of global disruptions, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, and ensuring sustainable growth, by creating innovative solutions through the use of new business models, new pricing structures, greater outsourcing, investment in and new approaches to using technology, and more effective uses of data, among others.



## V. Second Virtual Meeting of the ABA Policy advocacy Committee in 2021



The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee held on August 30 its second meeting for 2021 in an online format as it remained impossible to hold a face-to-face discussion due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The main agenda of the meeting was to consider position papers on policy issues that were earlier decided by the Committee at its first meeting for the year, also held virtually on March 26, 2021, as the focus of the policy advocacy work of ABA for the year 2021.

The position papers were presented by representatives of ABA member banks and ABA Knowledge partners who earlier agreed to prepare the papers. Members of the ABA Board of Directors and ABA members, associates and friends were invited to participate in the online meeting, namely:

- (a) **Mr. Oliver Hoffmann**, Managing Director, Head of Asia, Erste Group Bank AG, presented a summary of a paper on the new LIBOR scenario, touching mainly on how banks can adapt to the new environment.
- (b) **Mr. Suresh Emmanuel**, Chief Information Security Officer, Hatton National Bank, presented a paper addressing the issue of cyber security and what banks are doing to strengthen their capability in this area through, for instance, utilizing tools such as cyber insurance, among others.
- (c) **Mr. Shirish Pathak**, Managing Director, Fintelekt Advisory Services, presented a paper focusing on the three themes that have taken on greater prominence during the pandemic, namely, Anti-corruption, Economic Sanctions, and Financial Inclusion, and the compliance tools available for banks to address these issues.
- (d) **Ms. Armi Lamberte**, Head of the Portfolio Quality Division, Risk Management Group of Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC), and Mr. Juan Gabriel "Gabby" R. Tomas IV, Chief Risk Officer and Head of Risk Management Group of RCBC, presented a paper sharing the Bank's efforts to meet the challenges they experience in implementing the sustainability framework set by regulators for banks to follow to achieve sustainability goals.
- (e) **Mr. Mostafa Beheshti Rouy**, Member of the Board, Bank Pasargad from Iran presented a paper on "The Role of Banks in Business Survival After COVID-19 Pandemic" and sharing the Bank's policies and actions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.
- (f) **Mr. John Berry**, CEO of EFMA, presented a paper that looks at distribution, specifically on challenges and opportunities of the branch in today's banking environment.

## VI. 58th ABA Board of Directors' Meeting

Mr. Alles chaired the 58th ABA Board of Directors' Meeting held virtually on August 31, 2021. He thanked the Board members for attending the Meeting despite the challenges and difficulties posed by the pandemic, indicating their continued strong support for the Association. He also pointed out that it was the last Board meeting he would be chairing before relinquishing the position to the Incoming Chairman.

He took the opportunity to thank the Board members for the support they have extended to him during his tenure, saying that their kind cooperation and encouragement during his term have certainly facilitated his work as Chairman.

Mr. Alles also conveyed his appreciation to the ABA for managing to organize the recently concluded 37th ABA Conference on August 24-27 - along with other meetings by the Advisory Council, the Election Committee, and the Policy Advocacy Committee - despite the difficult circumstances and challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, thereby allowing members to stay in contact with each other and share information and experiences to help them survive and recover from the health crisis. He also thanked the Board for their continued support and participation in these activities.

Among others, the meeting endorsed the newly elected Board Members who would serve for the term 2021-2023, as well as approved the election of Mr. Eugene Acevedo, President and CEO of Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation from the Philippines as the new ABA Chairman, and Mr. Oliver Hoffmann, Managing Director and Head for Asia of Erste Bank Group, HK Branch from Austria, as the new Vice Chairman.



## Profile of Jonathan Alles



Mr. Jonathan Alles is the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Hatton National Bank PLC, one of the most prestigious private sector banks in Sri Lanka. Mr. Alles served as the Chairman of Asian Bankers Association for the period 2018 to 2021. In addition, he is on several Boards within the HNB Group and in the Banking Industry. He counts over 35 years of banking experience, having served several international banks including the National Bank of Abu-Dhabi, Saudi British Bank-Riyadh, British Bank of the Middle-East, HSBC-Dubai and Colombo.

Mr. Alles is a dynamic Banker and a corporate leader; he has contributed to HNB's macro development with the Bank now operating through 255 customer centres, using cutting edge technological platforms and enabling a new paradigm in Sri Lanka's banking culture. Under his leadership, HNB has received recognition from numerous international and local institutions and continues to set new benchmarks in the Sri Lankan banking industry.

Equipped with a First Class MBA in Finance from the University of Sterling-UK, Mr. Jonathan Alles is a Gold Medalist and an Associate Member of the Institute of Bankers of Sri Lanka.

A series of five circles of varying sizes and colors are scattered across the page. One is a small blue circle in the upper left. Below it is a large grey circle. To the right of the large grey circle is a medium-sized blue circle. Below the medium blue circle is a small grey circle. To the right of the small grey circle is another small grey circle. All circles have a subtle drop shadow.

## **Asian Bankers Association**

7F-2, No. 760, Sec. 4, Bade Rd. Songshan Dist., Taipei City 10567, Taiwan  
Tel: (886 2 )2760 1139, Fax: (886 2) 2760 7569, E-mail: [aba@aba.org.tw](mailto:aba@aba.org.tw)