



## **Asian Bankers Association**

### **THE 2025 ABA ANNUAL REPORT**

# **2025**

## Annual Report

The year just passed saw businesses – including those in the financial and banking sectors – still having to face formidable challenges – both economic and political – that significantly impacted the regional and global market environment. Indeed, the global economy continued to navigate a challenging landscape, with a complex interplay of factors that could lead to instability and uneven growth. These included rising geopolitical tensions, China's economic slowdown, and the risks of financial stress and trade fragmentation. These challenges have been exacerbated by issues like climate change, persistent inflation, and uneven economic growth across different regions.

Addressing these challenges requires global and regional cooperation and a focus on sustainable policies to promote inclusive and equitable development. Regional organizations such as the Asian Bankers Association (ABA) has a role to play in helping their respective members address the challenges before them and in promoting the sustainable growth of the region. Indeed, the importance of networking to encourage greater interaction among individual bankers and regional bankers in the Asian region will be crucial to enable them to go forward.

As Immediate Past ABA Chairman Mr. Daniel Wu said in his Opening Remarks at this year's 41<sup>st</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference held on 15-16 September 2025 in Bhutan, this is the reason why ABA matters. Compared with well-known institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which primarily engage at the sovereign and macroeconomic level, the ABA is unique in that it is a network of commercial banks and financial institutions, Mr. Wu stressed. "Our strength lies in peer-to-peer connections, practical knowledge exchange, and direct business linkages across borders. The ABA provides a platform where bankers can share first-hand experiences, develop cooperative initiatives, and jointly explore opportunities that address the real challenges faced by financial institutions in Asia. This practical, industry-driven orientation is ABA's comparative advantage, and it is precisely how we can help strengthen the capabilities and resilience of financial institutions in our respective countries," Mr. Wu emphasized.

It is in this light that the ABA continued to undertake activities in 2025 to further enhance the value of the Association to our members and the Asian banking sector. Many members were involved in the conceptualization and implementation of these activities, as summarized in this 2025 Annual Report. The ABA would therefore take this opportunity to thank members for your kind support and contribution in these efforts. Without your cooperation, our Association would not have achieved as much as it has in many of our projects and activities undertaken in 2025.



## Asian Bankers Association

### THE 2025 ABA ANNUAL REPORT



Guided by the earlier decisions of the ABA Board of Directors and members of the ABA Planning Committee, the Asian Bankers Association in 2025 undertook the following programs and activities since the 40<sup>th</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference held in November 2024 in Taipei, Taiwan:

#### I. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 41<sup>st</sup> ABA GENERAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

As part of the preparatory work for the holding of the 41<sup>st</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference, the ABA conducted the following activities:

##### A. Planning Committee Meeting

Prior to holding the 2025 ABA Planning Committee meeting, the Secretariat requested for suggestions from member banks on possible theme and topics for this year's Conference. The submissions were compiled for consideration during the Committee Meeting held in Bhutan on March 4 to discuss preparations for the Conference.



Presided by ABA Chairman Mr. Daniel Wu, the meeting was attended by ABA Board members, representatives of ABA member organizations, and representatives from Bank of Bhutan led by CEO Mr. Dorji Kadin.

The ABA Planning Committee Meeting discussed the proposed Conference venue, Conference themes and topics, possible speakers, and sponsorship efforts to support the event. In addition, the meeting also exchanged views on proposed policy advocacy initiatives, upcoming ABA activities, and membership recruitment and expansion.



During the visit to Bhutan, ABA Chairman Mr. Daniel Wu led a delegation with Bank of Bhutan CEO Dorji Kadin to call on Governor of Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) Dasho Penjore to introduce ABA and its activities, as well as to promote the 41<sup>st</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference in September and to grace the occasion with his presence



The delegation also called on Finance Minister, His Excellency Lyonpo Lekey Dorji to promote the 41st ABA General Meeting and Conference in



September, highlighting some of the key topics and issues to be covered by invited speakers during the two-day event, and invited him to attend this year's annual gathering of ABA members to be held for the first time in the beautiful country of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

### **Request for Suggestions on Conference Speakers**

Following the ABA Planning Committee Meeting in Bhutan, the ABA Secretariat subsequently sent out various circulars to members seeking their suggestions on possible speakers, panelists and/or moderators for the various Conference sessions.

### **Follow-up Meetings**

A series of online meetings were thereafter conducted by the ABA Secretariat with the organizing Committee in Bank of Bhutan to discuss the status of preparations for the Conference, including the Conference program, the list of possible speakers, the Conference promotional brochure, the Conference website, and other Conference-related matters.

### **Nominations for ABA Board Members 2026-2028**



In preparation for the election to be held during the Bhutan Conference of a new set of ABA Board of Directors to serve for the term 2026-2027, the ABA Secretariat requested ABA members to submit their nominees for the Board, sent out to members the names of the qualified nominees who have accepted to serve in the Board, and requested members to elect – via secret ballot - from among the qualified nominees. The list of elected Board members would be formally announced to the general membership during the 41<sup>st</sup> General Meeting

scheduled to take place on 16 September 2025.

### **Lunch Hosted by ABA Chairman Wu for Taiwanese Member Banks**



ABA Chairman Daniel Wu on June 26 hosted lunch for representatives of Taiwanese member banks as part of efforts to promote the 41st ABA General Meeting and Conference. He elaborated on the theme and topics to be discussed during the Conference, and stressed that their presence in the event will provide the the opportunity not only to exchange perspectives with experts on the issues to be covered by the sessions, but also to gain first-hand information on the economic situation in Bhutan and the business opportunities the country offers.

## Request for Suggestions on Activities for the 2026-2027 Work Program



Members of the ABA Board of Directors and all ABA members were requested to submit their suggestions on activities that the Association should undertake in the next two years. These activities should, as much as possible, benefit all members, further promote the growth and development of the Association, and help ABA attain its primary objectives. The suggestions would be considered for inclusion in the Framework for the 2026-2027 ABA Work Program for implementation during the two-year term of

the new members of the ABA Board of Directors to be elected during the Bhutan Conference.

### I. POLICY ADVOCACY



The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee held its first meeting for 2025 virtually on March 4, in conjunction with the Planning Committee Meeting. Chaired by M. Austin Chiang, Chief Strategy Officer at CTBC Bank, the meeting discussed and approved the Committee's Work Program for 2025, which mainly involved the preparation of papers addressing the following policy issues:

- a. Open banking and customer data privacy protection
- b. Cybersecurity and cyber insurance
- c. Money mule prevention in banking
- d. Ethical banking and corporate governance

Thereafter, at the request of the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee, the following member banks and Knowledge Partners agreed to prepare the above-mentioned policy papers, and presented them during the 64<sup>th</sup> ABA Board of Directors' Meeting held on 15 September 2025 in Bhutan:

- a. **Ms. Rachael Kao, President, CTBC Financial Holding Co. Ltd.**, presented a summary of a paper sharing the Bank's experience, practices and insights on ***"Ethical Banking and Corporate Governance"***, focusing largely on the following: Strengthening customer trust through stronger ethical banking principles and governance reform; Balancing shareholder value with social responsibility, financial inclusion, and ESG principles; and (c) Strengthening board accountability and corporate governance to prevent misconduct and strengthen ethical banking practices.
- b. **Mr. Reginaldo Carias, President and CEO, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC)** presented a paper sharing the experience and best practice of his organization on ***"Open Banking and Customer Data Privacy Protection"***. Among the topics that his presentation covered were the following: (a) Open banking to foster innovation, to improve customer experience, and to encourage cross-industry collaboration; (b) API ecosystem as backbone of open banking business model, particularly on challenges and solutions on technical, operational, regulatory aspects; and (c) Governance

structure and operating model on protecting customer data privacy in an open banking context, addressing compliance challenges and regulatory expectations in data sharing across jurisdictions, discussing approaches to balance customer convenience with robust data security.

- c. **Mr. Shirish Pathak**, Managing Director of Fintelekt Advisory Services, presented a paper sharing his organization's experience and insights on ***"Money Mule Account Issue in Banking"***. His presentation essentially addressed the following topics (a) Challenges and best practices on how banks can effectively control and prevent fraudulent accounts, enhancing overall security and trust in the banking system; (b) Archetypes and emerging threats related to money mule accounts in banking; (c) Strategies to enhance money mule detection mechanisms through AI and machine learning; and (d) Promoting more active engagement with regulators across countries to provide regulatory incentives and relevant support in helping banks address fraud/money mules account issue.
- e. Committee Chairman **Mr. Austin Chiang** presented a summary of the paper prepared by **Mr. Chris Baker, Regional Head of Cyber Asia, Munich Re**, sharing his organization's experience and insights on ***"Cyber Security and Cyber Insurance."*** Essentially, the paper presented a snapshot of today's cyber threat landscape in the financial services sector, and underscores that cyber insurance is a critical component of ensuring businesses remain resilient, inclusive, and future-ready.

According to the Munich Re paper, cybercrime is one of the most disruptive risks of the digital era. Financial services remain one of the most attractive targets for cybercriminals. Cyber insurance has evolved beyond being a simple risk transfer tool; it now plays an increasingly strategic role in banking. While cyber insurance cannot eliminate risk, it offers essential protection through financial support, expert resources, and regulatory coverage. Extending cyber cover to SMEs and individuals also creates unique opportunities to differentiate services and strengthen customer trust.



## II. TRAINING PROGRAMS

As part of its Professional Development Program, the ABA continued to undertake the following training programs for its members during the past year:

### A. Short-Term Visiting Programs

The ABA coordinated with two institutions – Taiwan Academy of Banking and Finance (TBAF) and State Bank of India (SBI) in organizing Short-Term Visiting Programs (STVP) for ABA member banks. The STVP aims to provide member banks, particularly those from less developed countries, the opportunity to study and undergo training on specific aspects of the operations and facilities of the host organizations, and learn from the latter's experience and best practices. The idea is to enable the visitors to: (i) enhance and upgrade their technical skills and knowledge in specific business areas, in the distinct and peculiar social, economic and business environment of the host country, and (ii) gain first-hand knowledge of the operations, systems and work procedures of the host organization's various line departments.

#### State Bank of India



The ABA Secretariat coordinated with the State Bank of India (SBI) on the Short-Term Visiting Program held on August 18-19, 2025 at the Staff Bank Staff College located in Hyderabad, India. During the two-day program, high-level officers of SBI shared the Bank's experience and best practices in the areas of Global Market/Treasury, Social Media and Data Analytics, Financial Inclusion, Leadership and Team Building, Risk Management, KYC/AML/CFT/FATCA Compliance and Challenges, Agri Business, SME-MSME Lending, and Branch Banking Operations.

## Taiwan Academy of Banking and Finance



The TABF agreed to conduct an STVP focusing on two themes, namely, Sustainable Finance and Fintech Innovation. Scheduled on October 21-22,

the program offers ABA members a unique two-day opportunity to gain first-hand exposure to Taiwan's leadership in fintech and sustainable finance. Through a thoughtfully curated agenda—including expert-led workshops, site visits to top financial institutions, and VIP access to the FinTech Taipei Forum—participants will engage directly with the ideas, institutions, and innovations shaping the future of finance in the region. Unfortunately, the program had been postponed for next year as the number of registered participants did not reach the minimum number required to proceed.

### **B. Webinars and Workshops**

Over the past year, the ABA also partnered with several of its Knowledge Partners in co-organizing webinars and workshops on topics of current interest to members. These included the following:

#### *Fintelekt's Virtual Workshop on Enhanced Due Diligence (December 3, 2024)*

The workshop provided participants with a roadmap to strengthen their organization's risk management practices. By integrating robust due diligence processes, enhanced monitoring, and effective governance, financial institutions can proactively mitigate risks, comply with regulations, and foster a culture of vigilance.

#### *Fintelekt's Virtual Workshop on AML Team Audit Ready (January 15, 2025)*

The workshop was specifically designed to equip AML compliance teams with the knowledge and tools required for seamless audit readiness within financial institutions.

#### *Fintelekt's webinar on 2024 Crypto Review & Outlook for 2025 (February 14, 2025)*

The webinar provided a comprehensive recap of the cryptocurrency landscape in 2024 and a thoughtful forecast for the year ahead. Reflecting on 2024, Mr. Koo, the presenter, described it as a year of significant momentum in the crypto space, driven by both technological advancements and regulatory shifts.

#### *Fintelekt's Virtual Workshop on Choosing the Right Technology (February 18, 2025)*

The workshop emphasized that financial institutions must assess their regulatory requirements, existing software capabilities, and future compliance needs before choosing a provider. It highlighted the importance of gap analysis to understand regulatory expectations, internal processes, and operational challenges.

#### *Qorus' Reinvent Forum APAC, Bangkok (February 19-20, 2025)*

The Forum brought renowned experts and influential industry leaders from the banking and insurance sectors across Southeast Asia, Europe, India, and Australia. This dynamic event served as a key platform for collaboration and innovation in digital banking, open finance, AI technologies, ESG and sustainability trends, and next-generation business models.

*Fintelekt's Certified AML/CFT Professional (FCAP) training, Bangkok (February 20-21, 2025)*

The program discussed practical experiences with fundamental aspects of AML and CFT, i.e., a strategic understanding of AML/CFT risks and the application of a risk-based approach. It highlighted the need for a strong AML governance framework, balancing AML compliance and business priorities in accordance with the defined risk appetite of the organization and the consequences of non-compliance.

*Fintelekt's Virtual Workshop on Fraud with Ph.D. Skiba (March 19, 2025)*

The webinar demonstrated that fighting fraud is sometimes as easy as outrunning your closest friend in a race. With an explosion in the number of connected devices, it often takes just one click to compromise an organisation's data and accounts. Several case examples from the presenter's own experience explained the techniques and typologies used by criminals including cryptocurrencies, technologies using artificial intelligence such as deep fakes and voice cloning and phishing.

*LexisNexis' webinar on Money Mules: The enablers of scams (March 20, 2025)*

The webinar explored the pivotal role money mules play in channeling illicit funds from scams to cybercriminals, emphasizing their impact on digital banking fraud across the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. It also outlined how mules obscure the trail of fraudulent proceeds through complex networks of accounts, often leveraging social engineering tactics like fake job offers, romance scams, and coercion to recruit individuals - both complicit and unwitting.

*Fintelekt's Virtual workshop on KYC (April 22, 2025)*

The workshop discussed some of the largest financial crimes that had recently been investigated in the region to highlight the increasing complexity of financial crime, especially scams, fraud, organised crime and emerging trends like "money laundering as a service." KYC should not be treated as a compliance formality but as a strategic, risk-based process integral to combating financial crime.

*TABF & Z/Yen webinar on "Taiwan's AI-Driven Financial Innovation & Digital Transformation," (April 30, 2025)*

The webinar provided key insights into Taiwan's latest AI financial policies, the digitalization of the banking sector, and the role of AI in enhancing financial operations, risk management, customer engagement, and process optimization.

*Fintelekt's webinar on Decoding the Basel AML Index (May 6, 2025)*

The webinar explained the Basel AML Index, a specialized risk assessment tool that evaluates the vulnerability of countries to money laundering and terrorist financing. Developed in 2012 in response to growing regulatory emphasis on the risk-based approach, the Index was initially tailored to support medium and small financial institutions and the non-financial sector.

*Trueventus' 2<sup>nd</sup> Group Treasurers Innovation Forum, Bangkok (May 14-15, 2025)*

The two-day event comprised of 18 different sessions, provided treasury analysts, credit risk & financial analysts, head of finance & treasury operations, CEOs and CFOs the knowledge and skills to improve their treasury operations while simultaneously help participants expand their professional network in Asia.



*Trueventus' 3<sup>rd</sup> Chief Risk Officer Summit, Bangkok (May 14-15, 2025)*

The Summit equipped risk professionals with relevant and actionable information since they play a pivotal role in current world industries, with over 75% of global companies reporting that risk management significantly impacts their success, according to PwC. The challenge to maintain operational continuity has also increased further in the finance industry where 86% of organizations have faced cyberattacks.

*Regulation Asia's Fraud and Financial Crime Asia 2025, Singapore (May 15, 2025)*

The annual forum was a vital gathering for public and private sector leaders, experts, and stakeholders to address the evolving threats and regulatory challenges facing financial institutions. This fosters collaboration, offering a unique platform to share insights, discuss emerging risks, and explore solutions to protect financial systems across Asia.

*Fintelekt's Virtual Workshop on AML Risks in DNFBPs: Banks & Financial Institutions (May 15, 2025)*

The session explained the various sectors that fall under the umbrella of DNFBPs, including real estate agents, jewelers, casinos, lawyers, and accountants. These sectors are inherently vulnerable and may often be conduits for money laundering and terrorist financing due to relatively lower regulation, limited scrutiny and low awareness of ML/TF risks.

*LexisNexis Risk Solutions' Risk Ready Kuala Lumpur 2025, Kuala Lumpur (May 29, 2025)*

The one-day conference brought Malaysia-based bankers and industry leaders in risk management, fraud prevention, and compliance to provide participants with updates of the latest regulatory changes, innovations, industry knowledge, innovations, and thought leadership working on Financial Crime Compliance and Fraud.

*Temenos' webinar on Moving Banking to SaaS (May 29, 2025)*

The session highlighted the growing shift of banks of all sizes to Software-as-a-service (SaaS) platforms like Temenos Banking Cloud. The benefits of SaaS in delivering greater speed to market and agility is transforming banking from the inside.

*Fintelekt's Certified AML/CFT Professional (FCAP) training, Bangkok (June 19-20, 2025)*

The program discussed practical experiences with fundamental aspects of AML and CFT, i.e., a strategic understanding of AML/CFT risks and the application of a risk-based approach. He highlighted the need for a strong AML governance framework, balancing AML compliance and business priorities in accordance with the defined risk appetite of the organization and the consequences of non-compliance.

*Fintelekt's Virtual Virtual Workshop on Product Vulnerabilities for ML/TF (June 25, 2025)*

The workshop aimed at identifying product features that criminals often misuse and to recognize common AML typologies and red flags in product abuse, such as money mules, shell companies, and trade-based money laundering. It also presented real-world cases where financial products were misused, with key lessons learned.

*LexisNexis Risk Solutions' webinar on APAC Online Fraud Report (June 27, 2025)*

The webinar explained that Fraud in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region is continuously evolving. Fortunately, businesses can leverage new tools and precise data to stay a step ahead of these risks to prevent losses and costly financial and operational complications. The LexisNexis® Risk Solutions APAC Cybercrime Report highlights emerging fraud trends and attack patterns across

the customer journey and among industries in APAC region derived from the analysis of 9.8 billion transactions.

*Financial Times' Banking Summit Asia, Hong Kong (September 11, 2025)*

The Summit gathered the pan-Asian community of CEOs and CXOs, to explore and debate the latest challenges and opportunities driving banking forward in the region — from geopolitical change to technology in Asia's most innovative hubs.

*ABA & Qorus Bankers Expedition to Hanoi and Ho Chi Ming City (October 6-7, 2025)(TBC).*

The expedition aimed to provide European and Asian delegates the opportunity to meet the largest Vietnamese banks and key government officers to understand the banking environment in Vietnam.

*Fintelekt's Certified AML/CFT Professional (FCAP) training, Bangkok (October 9-10)*

The program discussed practical experiences with fundamental aspects of AML and CFT, i.e., a strategic understanding of AML/CFT risks and the application of a risk-based approach. He highlighted the need for a strong AML governance framework, balancing AML compliance and business priorities in accordance with the defined risk appetite of the organization and the consequences of non-compliance.

*ABA & Fintelekt CEO Summit, Singapore (November 13-14, 2025) (TBC)*

The Summit was a 2-day Summit for CEOs and C-level Officers where mid and long term emerging issues in financial markets were explored. Topics for discussion included new AML regulations, new treasury operations, crypto currencies, international trade operations among others.

#### **IV. WEBINAR SERIES CONNECTING AND EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES WITH ABA**

The ABA continued to conduct the webinar series on ***“Connecting and Exploring Opportunities with ABA”*** which was initiated in 2023. This activity consists of a series of webinars that feature special one-hour country presentations by member banks from selected ABA member countries. The country presentations are intended to provide the presenting member banks the opportunity to share information about the market conditions and business opportunities in their respective countries, as well as on their organizations' activities and services.

For 2025, the ABA Secretariat approached four member organizations – the Philippine National Bank, the Bank of East Asia Ltd., Bank of Bhutan, and Bank of Maldives - to take part in the webinar series this year and make a presentation on the current trends and latest developments in the economy and banking sectors of their respective countries.

***Philippine National Bank***



The Philippine National Bank (PNB) hosted the webinar on the country's national economy and banking environment on 10 April aimed at sharing the Bank's institutional initiatives and insights on the Philippine economic outlook for 2025. The session gathered 326 registrants from 28 countries.

Moderated by Mr. David Jimenez Maireles, Qorus Digital Payment Expert, the one-hour session featured presentations by Ms. Jennifer Ng, PNB Senior Vice President and Head of Marketing, who provided an overview of PNB's legacy as a universal bank with over a century of service, highlighting its robust domestic presence and international network; and Mr. Alvin Arogo, PNB First Vice President and Head of the Research Division, who gave a briefing on the Philippine economy, forecasting a 6.2% GDP growth of the country, attributing this outlook to resilient domestic consumption, sustained infrastructure spending, and healthy foreign remittance inflows.

### ***The Bank of East Asia Ltd.***



**BEA 東亞銀行**

The webinar conducted by The Bank of East Asia Ltd. (BEA) from Hong Kong took place on September 24. The one-hour session covered the following topics: (a) Introduction on BEA and the Bank's efforts and achievements in ESG; and (b) an overview of Hong Kong SAR's economy.

Participants learned that BEA is one of the first banks headquartered in Hong Kong to make a climate pledge, with a diverse lending and investment portfolio covering companies across the Chinese Mainland and beyond - each with distinct decarbonisation agendas and targets. Mr. David Kim, Head of Sustainability at BEA, delved into the success and unique challenges faced by the Bank and the lessons learned along the way as BEA continues on its journey towards net zero. Mr. Tristan Zhuo, Chief Economist at BEA, examined the key developments shaping the current landscape, including the Fed's response to U.S. tariff policies, as well as the outlook for the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong economies.

### **PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL MEETING.**

#### ***58<sup>th</sup> ADB Annual Meeting in Milan, Italy***

During the past year, the ABA was invited to participate in meetings organized by other



regional and multilateral organizations. ABA member bank representatives – as well as executives from the ABA Secretariat Deputy Secretary Mr. Amador Honrado Jr. and Senior Officer Ms. Teresa Liu – joined other delegates from

private and public sector organizations at the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held in Milan, Italy on May 4-7, 2025, marking Italy's first time to host and the first ADB Annual Meeting in Europe in almost a decade.

ADB Annual Meeting is a key opportunity for ADB's 68 members to consider development issues and challenges facing Asia and the Pacific. Several thousand participants, including finance ministers, central bank governors, senior government officials, members of the private sector, representatives of international organizations, civil society, and the media regularly join the meeting, which has become a premier forum for the discussion of economic and social

development issues in Asia and the Pacific. During the past several years, the ADB has accredited the ABA as a Guest Association in the Annual Meetings of its Board of Governors.

More than 5,000 participants joined the Annual Meeting in Milan, Italy consisting of representatives of governments—including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni—the private sector, civil society, and academia. Held under the theme “**Sharing Experience, Building Tomorrow**”, this 2025 Annual Meeting highlighted four focus areas that are central to driving transformational change across Asia and the Pacific.

- To **address the vulnerability of the region’s food systems**, ADB will scale up financing for food systems transformation to \$40 billion by 2030.
- ADB is **investing in digital technologies** to improve access to education, finance, and markets.
- ADB is **investing in modernizing and connecting energy systems**, including readiness to commit up to \$10 billion to support work on the ASEAN Power Grid
- ADB is **deepening investments to build resilience** by strengthening infrastructure, restoring and protecting ecosystems, and helping vulnerable communities adapt to the impacts of climate change
- ADB also reaffirmed its commitment to **scale up private sector development**, aiming to increase private sector financing four-fold to \$13 billion annually by 2030.

During the Milan meeting, Mr. Honrado and Ms. Liu also managed to meet and say hello to



ADB President Mr. Masato Kando and his wife during the ADB President’s Reception. They exchanged name cards with President Kando and briefly introduced ABA, its membership, its main objective, and its activities. They also informed him of the upcoming 41<sup>st</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference to be held on 15-16 September in Bhutan.

### III. MEETINGS WITH MEMBER BANKS

#### Oliver Hoffmann of Erste Group Bank Visits ABA Secretariat



ABA Secretariat executives led by Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Darson Chiu on May 9, 2025 met with Mr. Oliver Hoffmann, Managing Director, Head of Asia, Erste Group Bank, AG, HK Branch, former AVA Vice Chairman and currently member of the ABA Board of Directors. The meeting took place during the latter's recent visit to Taipei.

Mr. Hoffmann provided news on recent activities of Erste Group Bank, while the Secretariat officers shared with Mr. Hoffmann the progress on preparations for the 41<sup>st</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference to be held on 15-16 September 2025 in Bhutan.

#### HNB CEO Meets with ABA Secretariat Executives



ABA Vice Chairman and Managing Director/CEO of Hatton National Bank (HNB) Mr. Damith Pallewatte met with ABA Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Darson Chiu at the HNB headquarters in Colombo, Sri Lanka on November 12.

Dr. Chiu was accompanied by ABA Deputy Secretary Mr. Amador Honrado at the meeting, which took place during their recent visit to Colombo to attend the 39<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), the parent organization on ABA. The Conference was hosted by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL).

During the meeting, Dr. Chiu briefed Mr. Pallewatte on upcoming activities of the ABA, particularly the preparations for the 42<sup>nd</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference to be held in Maldives in the latter part of 2026, with the Bank of Maldives as host organization. They also exchanged ideas on possible activities that can be jointly organized by ABA and HNB next year designed for the mutual benefit of HNB and ABA member banks.

Mr. Pallewatte also expressed interest in participating in the proposed meeting of the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee scheduled early next year to discuss preparations for the 42<sup>nd</sup> ABA General Meeting and Conference to be hosted by Bank of Maldives in the latter part of 2026. He further reiterated HNB's offer to host the ABA annual gathering in 2027 and informed the visiting ABA Secretariat executives that he has already organized a team from the Bank that will be responsible for making the necessary preparations in coordination with the ABA Secretariat.



## ABA Board Member from Erste Bank Visits ABA Secretariat in Taipei



Mr. Oliver Hoffman, Managing Director, Head of Asia, Erste Group Bank AG, Hong Kong Branch and Member of the ABA Board of Directors, on November 21 met with ABA Secretariat executives led by Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Darson Chiu at the Secretariat headquarters in Taipei, Taiwan. Mr. Hoffmann was accompanied by his colleague Mr. Adrian Yuen, Director, Home Markets Desk. Also joining the meeting was ABA Deputy Secretary Mr. Amador Honrado Jr.

During the meeting, Mr. Hoffmann informed Dr. Chiu that they were visiting Taipei to follow up on collaboration activities of Erste Bank with a number of Taiwanese banks – some of which are also ABA members – particularly those that have plans of setting up operations in Austria and other neighboring countries in Eastern Europe.

For his part, Dr. Chiu proposed to Mr. Hoffmann the possibility of Erste Bank hosting a Short-Term Visiting Program for ABA members who may be eyeing the Eastern European market and interested to learn how Erste Bank may be able to help them in this regard. He also took the opportunity to invite Mr. Hoffmann and Mr. Yuen to participate in next year's ABA Conference to be held in Maldives.

## NEW MEMBERS

Since the last ABA Conference held in November 2024 in Taipei, ABA has received membership applications from the following:

### Myanma Tourism Bank



Myanma Tourism Bank (MTB) has joined the association as a Regular Member. MTB was established in 2018 with the approval of the Central Bank of Myanmar under the Financial Institutions Law. Headquartered on Sule Pagoda Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, MTB operates 18 branches across Myanmar, ensuring comprehensive access to financial services nationwide.

The Bank specializes in providing tailored financial solutions to individuals, SMEs, and businesses, particularly in the tourism sector. By focusing on customer-centric services, MTB strives to address the unique needs of its clients, supported by a dedicated team of banking professionals. MTB is committed to promoting financial inclusion, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development in Myanmar. The Bank plays an active role in fostering community development and supporting green initiatives.



## BPC



BPC has joined ABA as an Associate Member. BPC is a proven industry leader that is shaping the world of transactions with quick, safe and easy payment processing. With a focus on exceptional technology development and customer service, BPC helps financial institutions and businesses to deliver innovative and best-in-class proven solutions that fit with today's consumer lifestyle when banking, shopping, or moving in both urban and rural areas.

With more than 500 customers across 140 countries, BPC collaborates with all ecosystem players to deliver services for the digital world. Its core product SmartVista suite comprises cutting-edge banking, commerce, and mobility platforms that enable innovative solutions for digital banking, ATM and switching, payments processing, card, and fraud management, financial inclusion, merchant portals, transport, and smart cities.

## PUBLICATIONS



The ABA Secretariat continued to publish its monthly **ABA Newsletter** containing reports on activities of member banks as well as recent trends and developments in the banking and financial sector not only in Asia-Pacific countries but globally as well.

## OTHERS



ABA Chairman Mr. Thinley Namgyel was invited by the Association of Credit Rating Agencies in Asia to participate in its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration held in December in Manila. Since Mr. Namgyel's travel schedule did not allow him to travel to Manila at that time, he instead agreed to prepare a pre-recorded greeting to ACRAA. In his greeting, Mr. Namgyel said that ACRAA was formed in 2001 as an initiative of the ABA, in line with ABA's efforts to promote the development of Asia's bond market and cross-border investment throughout the region. He pointed out that since it held its organizational meeting 25 years ago at the headquarters of the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines, ACRAA has continued to play an important role of establishing and disseminating the best practices in rating process, conducting joint training workshops, collecting information on the global regulatory framework over credit rating agencies, and providing information on the bond markets and mandatory rating requirements in Asia.



Mr. Namgyel expressed confidence that with the strong dedication and commitment of its officers, ACRAA will continue to promote cooperation among its members for the purpose of improving rating quality.