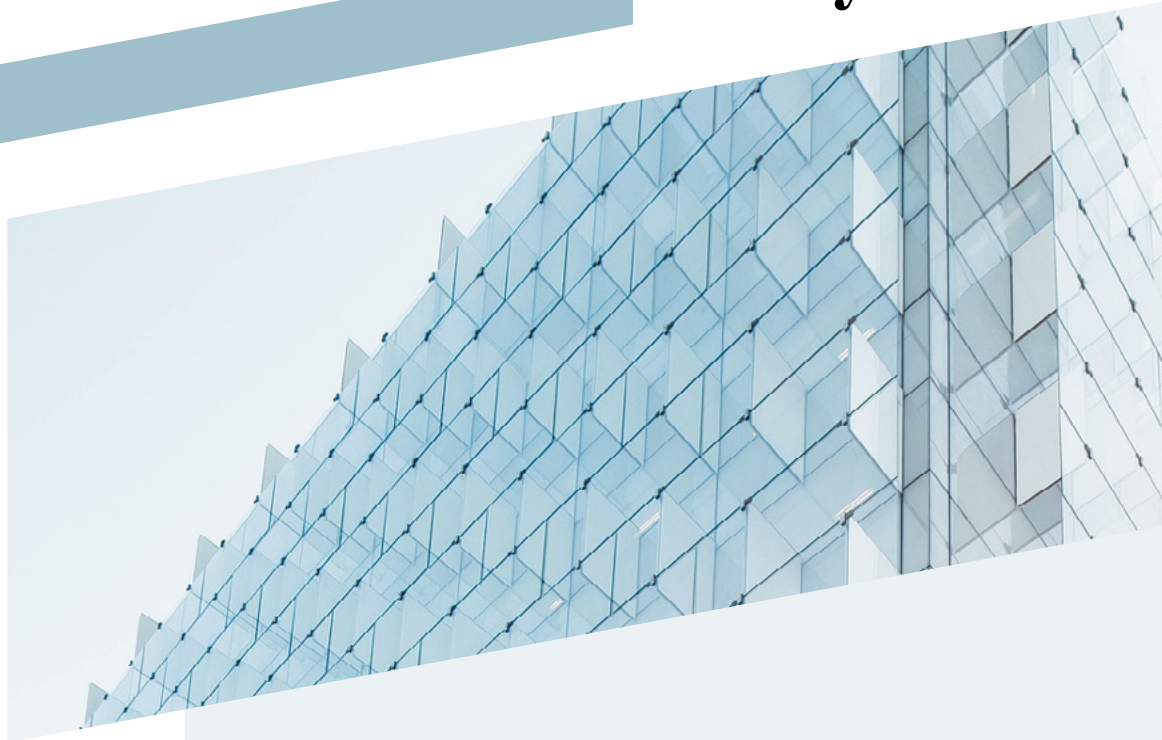


ABA NEWSLETTER

2026

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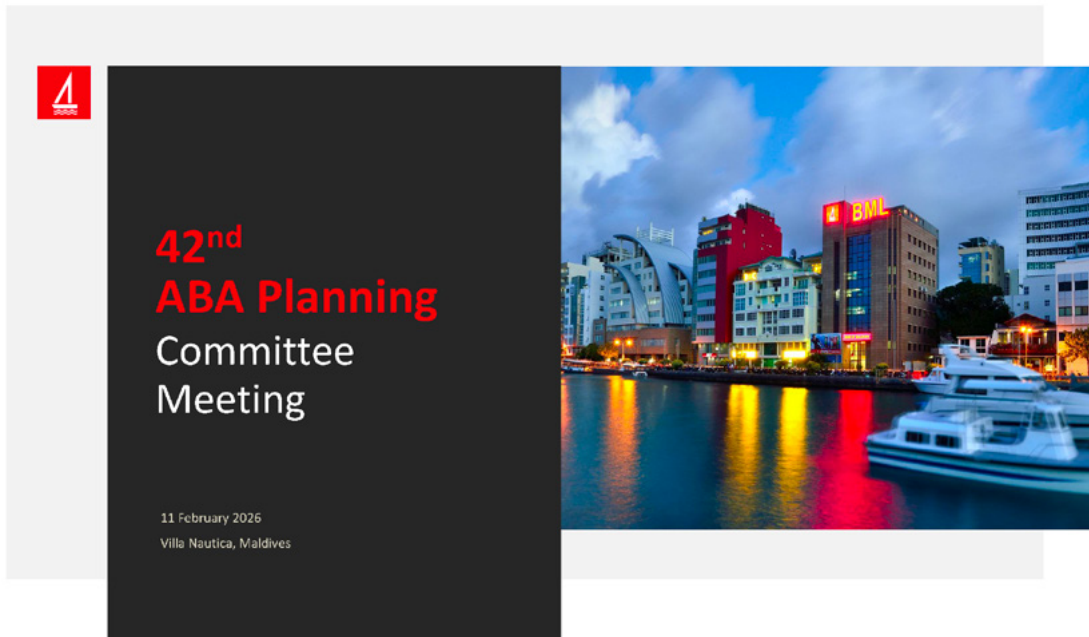
About ABA

The Asian Bankers Association (ABA) was initially established in 1981 as Asian Bankers Council as one of the Product and Service Councils of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).

The ABA aims to provide a forum for advancing the cause of the banking and finance industry in the region and promoting regional economic cooperation. Its primary objectives include the following:

- To serve as a venue for an exchange of views and information on banking opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region;
- To facilitate the meeting of bankers in the region in an atmosphere of fellowship and friendship;
- To encourage joint activities that would enhance the role of its members in servicing the financial needs of their respective economies and in promoting regional development; and
- To undertake projects that will encourage trade, industrial, and investment cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Planning Committee Meets in Maldives in Preparation for the 2026 ABA Conference



The ABA Planning Committee Meeting was hosted by Bank of Maldives on 11 February 2026 at the Villa Nautica Resort in Maldives primarily to discuss preparations for the 42nd ABA General Meeting and Conference, scheduled during the latter part of 2026 in Maldives. Discussions covered the confirmation of the proposed Conference dates and Conference venue, finalization of conference themes and topics, and possible speaker line-up.

In addition, the Committee also discussed ABA's planned activities for 2026, including formulation of policy advocacy initiatives for the year, webinars and other training programs, and membership recruitment efforts.



The Planning Committee decided to hold the 42nd ABA General Meeting and Conference on 1-3 September 2026 at the Kurumba Resort in Maldives, with the Bank of Maldives as the host institution.

The three-day conference program will feature:

- An opening ceremony and keynote speeches
- A host bank session highlighting Maldives'

- financial sector and investment opportunities
- Panel discussions on emerging banking trends and regulatory developments
- The ABA Policy Advocacy Committee meeting to discuss ongoing initiatives
- B2B networking sessions to encourage business and banking partnerships
- The ABA Board of Directors meeting and the Chairman's Report

The Planning Committee considered the suggestions submitted earlier by member banks on possible theme and topics of the Conference, and agreed on the following:

Theme: **“Banking in Asia: Investing to Build Resilience”**

Plenary Sessions

1. Digital First for the Digital Era

This plenary provides an opportunity to discuss innovative ways through which to deliver banking services that meets the need of customers. Topics can include:

- Emerging Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Innovation Strategies
- Payment revolution for the next-gen
- AI-powered growth
- Financial education in the age of misinformation
- Agentic commerce
- Cross border payments innovation

2. Sustainability: Building Resilience

This plenary offers an opportunity to discuss

environmental, social and governance (ESG) concerns. Topics can include:

- Financing climate adaptation covering both the public and private sector.
- Incorporating sustainability in business operations: case studies from across Asia.
- Blue economy and sustainable tourism finance

3. Success Through Synergy: Leveraging Technology for Risk

The integration of technology in risk management is critical for Asian banks, and its successful application by banks with more resources available to invest in this area can hold invaluable lessons for peers. Topics can include:

- Utilisation of risk management software
- Use of predictive analytics to forecast future risks
- Risk strategies to support digital progress
- Responsible AI in banking
- Governance and board oversight

4. Governors' Roundtable

The Governors' Roundtable, convened as a plenary session, will bring together central bank governors from key regional jurisdictions to exchange best practices on issues such as financial stability, digital transformation, and sustainable finance, which will share the future of banking regulation and economic resilience across Asia and beyond.



Policy Advocacy

As part of its 2026 Work Program, the ABA Policy Advocacy Committee agreed to prepare five key policy papers focusing on the following issues:

a. Movable Finance

- Sharing of experience and practices on movable finance
- Sharing of knowledge on policies adopted by governments to help implement or promote the practice of movable finance

b. Fraud and Cybersecurity

- Advocating for a coordinated regional framework to address rising cyber fraud, scam networks, and mule account activity

(e.g., cross-border information-sharing mechanisms, common typologies, and public-private collaboration to enhance digital trust and consumer protection)

c. Green and Sustainable Finance

- Sharing of experiences and practices in green and sustainable finance,
- Advocating for realistic finance frameworks that recognize the development stage of emerging economies (e.g., tapping the Green Climate Fund (GCF))

d. Ethical AI Governance and Policies

- Sharing of experiences and practices on policies, standards, and oversight to ensure AI systems are developed and used responsibly
- Sharing of best practices on proper usage, procurement, vetting/approvals of use cases, deployment and monitoring of AI models and providers;
- Implementing regional guidelines on ethical AI governance, focusing on transparency, explainability, and data protection.

e. Cross-Border Payments

- Supporting policy initiatives promoting instant payment systems across Asia-Pacific region, achieving harmonized payment standards while strengthening transparency and reducing settlement risks.
- Establishing correspondent banking relationships among ABA member banks, including an RMA relationship for payment and relationship.

The ABA plans to continue conducting activities in 2026 in line with its Professional Development Program for members. These include the following:

- A webinar series in collaboration with the following member banks to gain a better understanding of the current economic and financial sector situation in their respective countries and explore business opportunities:
 - ◇ Bank of Maldives
 - ◇ Myanmar Tourism Bank
 - ◇ Azer-Turk Bank
 - ◇ Hatton National Bank
- Webinars and workshops with ABA's various Knowledge Partners on topics of current interest to member banks and the banking sector as a whole.
- Short-term visiting programs with the following member banks to share experience

and best practices in key banking operations:

- ◇ Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC)
- ◇ Taiwan Academy of Banking and Finance (TABF)
- ◇ State Bank of India (SBI)

The ABA will continue to encourage its members to participate in meetings of other financial sector organizations, including the following:

- 59th ADB Annual Board of Governors Meeting to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on May 3-6, 2026
- Symposium on Asia Banking and Finance organized by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and the Monetary Authority of Singapore and to be held in Singapore during the second quarter of 2026
- Annual Meeting of the Philippine Council of Association and Association Executives (PCAAE) to be held in Manila during the third quarter of 2026.

Courtesy Calls

On February 12, members of the Planning Committee made courtesy calls on the Maldives Monetary Authority and Ministry of Finance arranged by Bank of Maldives.

Maldives Monetary Authority

The delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) and was received by Ms. Aishath Asna Hamdi, Deputy Governor and Mr. Mohamed Muaz, Managing Director, Financial Stability. During the meeting, members of the delegation exchanged views with the Deputy Governor on developments in the regional banking sector and opportunities for strengthening cooperation among Asian financial institutions.



Mr. Mohamed Shareef, CEO and Managing Director of the Bank of Maldives and ABA Vice Chairman,

provided an overview of the purpose of the delegation's visit. He highlighted the role of ABA in promoting dialogue and collaboration among banking institutions across the Asia-Pacific region, and shared information on the upcoming 42nd ABA General Meeting and Conference scheduled to take place later this year.

The discussion also touched on possible areas of engagement for regulators and industry leaders, particularly in light of evolving trends in financial services, regional economic cooperation, and emerging banking innovations. Mr. Shareef took the opportunity to formally invite the Deputy Governor to participate in the conference and to consider joining as a speaker to share insights from the Maldives' regulatory perspective. The meeting concluded with mutual expressions of support for continued engagement between the Maldives Monetary Authority and the Asian Bankers Association.

Ministry of Finance



The delegation also paid a courtesy visit to the Ministry of Finance, where they were received by Mr. Hussain Sham Adam, Minister of State for Finance and Planning, together with Mr. Mohamed Azad, Accountant General, Mr. Hassan Miras, Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning, Ms. Fathimath Ghaziya Fathuhee, Deputy Chief Debt Management Executive and Mr. Ahmed Azyan Hameed, Director. The meeting began with a round of introductions, during which delegates briefly presented their respective institutions and roles within the banking and financial community.



Discussions focused on potential themes and topical areas that could be explored at the upcoming 42nd ABA General Meeting and Conference, with particular attention given to issues relevant to the evolving regional financial landscape. Participants exchanged views on topics such as financial sector resilience, digital transformation in banking, and opportunities for greater collaboration among financial institutions across the region.

The delegation also took the opportunity to promote the upcoming conference, which is scheduled to be held in September, highlighting its significance as a platform for banking leaders, regulators, and industry stakeholders to engage in dialogue on key developments affecting the financial sector. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen ties with the Maldivian financial authorities and to explore avenues for further cooperation and participation in ABA activities.



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