

## Biography

Professor Kuperan Viswanathan is a leading natural resource economist with more than 25 years of experience in resource economics, policy and development research, social science research capacity building, education and training. He was a member of the World Bank affiliated Centers for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) senior researchers' team and led the Center's Dhaka and South Asia office from January 2004 – March 2005. He led the Global Project on Fisheries Co-management which involved extensive partnership and research development with fisheries line agencies and research centers in Asia and Africa from 1999-2003. The Project involved collaboration and working with 27 partner organizations in 12 countries in Asia and Africa to systematically document co-management experiences in those countries and explain the nature of the function of co-management arrangements in the fisheries of partner countries. He is also active in professional organizations in Malaysia and abroad and serves in the editorial committees of major natural resource journals of developing countries such as the African Journal of Marine Science and the Malaysian Journal of Agricultural Economics. Since the early 1980s, he has worked as researcher, project leader, senior scientist, director and expert adviser for a number of organizations such as WorldFish, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Development Research Center of Canada (IDRC), and Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), among others. He has over 45 technical publications and has visited more than 30 countries for professional activities. He has organized and chaired numerous technical sessions during conferences for these organizations and forums. He served as an Associate Professor of Resource Economics in the Faculty of Economics and Management of University Putra Malaysia from 1995 to 1998 before joining the CGIAR in 1999. He has also vast consulting experience in the ASEAN region and has served as the Asian Development Bank Project Team Leader/Aquaculture and Fisheries Policy and Institution Specialist for the Development of the Strategy for Sustainable Aquaculture Development for Poverty Reduction in the Philippines from July 2006 to March 2007. During that period he led a team of three international consultants and nine local consultants for the development of a comprehensive strategy for aquaculture development for poverty reduction and environmental sustainability that is intended to help the Philippines Government. He was also Lead Author on the United Nations-endorsed Global Environment Assessment: The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Project (2001-2005). The Project assessed the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and established the scientific basis for actions to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and their contribution to human well-being. He is also a member of an FAO Expert Group that examines the issues of fishing capacity in developing countries and has examined the issue of fishing capacity in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Based on his international exposure, research and consulting experience in many countries, he teaches Global Economic Theories and Issues and International Business and Managerial Economics for the MBA and DBA students at the Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business.

## **Abstract**

### **Employment Opportunities for Fishers in Southeast Asia**

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Fisheries the world over are under heavy overfishing pressure. This has resulted in the collapse of some fisheries and loss of employment to fishers. Fishers often are the most difficult of people to adjust to other modes of work. The management of Oceans has been the weakest in the history of mankind. The vastness and the resources required to control access to the oceans has resulted in limited ability of most nations to manage the oceans. Massive over fishing both legally and illegally has been the outcome. Experts estimate that up to \$23.5 billion worth of fish enter the world market each year from illegal fishing, which averages to approximately 1 in 5 fish caught in the wild (PEW trusts study 2015). Maintaining employment opportunities for fishers will be a real issue in the years to come as fish stocks decline and opportunities for alternative work for fishers is very limited. This keynote address will focus on this critical issue and challenges faced by fisheries managers and governments of Southeast Asia. These countries produce about 21 million tons of fish accounting for a quarter of the global fish production. The fisheries in the ASEAN region employ close to 30 million people and their employment is being threatened by overfishing and illegal fishing. Given that the average household size of fishing households is five individuals, the total people dependent on fishing is as high as 150 million people. The focus of this address is on how the employment of fishers in Southeast Asia can be secured and what alternative employment options are there given the continued decline in the resource.