

i) Trade and Economic

Collectively and individually the economies of the ASEAN countries are among the fastest growing and most dynamic in the world, offering unparalleled opportunities for the export of Canadian goods and services as well as promising benefits to Canadian investment interests.

Greater openness and transparency are developing as regional economies diversify and mature. Canada-ASEAN consultations take place regularly to enhance industrial co-operation, to assist in liberalization and expansion of trade relations, and to target development co-operation to the mutual benefit of both parties. Regular parliamentary exchanges and ministerial visits also contribute to this process. These political or government-to-government linkages are in turn supplemented by a whole series of business, non-governmental organization and institutional connections.

In 1992 Canadian exports to ASEAN countries totalled \$1.5 billion (about the same level as in the two previous years), with imports to Canada from the region totalling \$2 billion. The level of Canadian assistance was \$97.25 million. As many as 10,084 students from the ASEAN countries studied in Canada in 1992, while 73,011 tourists from the region visited Canada.

ASEAN countries are members of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), established to promote liberalized trade and economic relations among the countries of Asia, Australasia and North America. An APEC Summit will be hosted by President Clinton in Seattle in November and most ASEAN leaders are expected to attend.

At the July 1993 Post-Ministerial Conference, the SSEA announced the commissioning of a study under the auspices of the Canada-ASEAN Centre of links between the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the NAFTA.

ii) Political

Political linkages have developed through consultative mechanisms such as the PMC. These meetings provide opportunities for exchanges on both regional and global issues of concern. Canada has been in the forefront of efforts to stimulate a more focused discussion of regional security which will provide opportunities to promote its approaches to non-proliferation, preventive diplomacy and conflict management. The 1993 Post-Ministerial Conference endorsed the launching of an ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) for the discussion of security issues, to be held in Bangkok in 1994, with participation by ASEAN members and Dialogue Partners as well as China, Russia, Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea.