

ASEAN

Association of South East Asian Nations

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) composed of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, was founded in 1967 to promote peace, stability and development in Southeast Asia.

Economic cooperation served as the first practical objective of the Association. Largely in response to events in Indochina, however, and the realization on the part of the individual ASEAN countries that jointly they could accomplish more on the world stage than if they acted individually, political cooperation has become one of the cornerstones of the Association. Indeed, because of their strategic location, their considerable natural resources and their growing political cohesion, the member states of ASEAN have become a vital factor in the political evolution of the region and, by extension, the Pacific as well.

For example, in 1971, representatives of the 5 ASEAN governments signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, calling for a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in the Southeast Asia free from outside interference. This idea has become increasingly important following the fall of South Vietnam and the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, and is now a principal ASEAN doctrine.