

ASEAN

Official Name: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Site of Secretariat: Jakarta

BACKGROUND

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the most successful regional organization in Asia and the Pacific, was formed in 1967 to promote economic, political, regional security and cultural ties among the six ASEAN nations (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines) and with the international community.

ASEAN nations have developed a very effective program of consultation and political co-operation. ASEAN began establishing "dialogue partnerships" with selected countries in 1972. Canada became a Dialogue Partner in 1977 with the SSEA participating in the annual Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) of ASEAN and Dialogue Partner foreign ministers. Other Dialogue Partners are Australia, the European Community, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and the U.S. Canadian participation in ASEAN's successful program of political consultation provides an opportunity for ministerial- and official-level exchanges on regional and global issues of concern to Canada. This privileged dialogue partnership also gives Canada an opportunity for economic access and advantage, and sets the framework for formal relations, which have become increasingly multidimensional.

CANADIAN INTERESTS

Fundamental to Canada and ASEAN's mutual interests is a common interest in ensuring peace and prosperity in Asia and elsewhere in the world. Canada's involvement in the collective search for a peaceful solution to the Cambodian problem is evidence of a joint desire to promote regional harmony. Canada also co-operated during the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN) in seeking reform of the world trading system. Canada and four members of ASEAN (Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia) also share membership of the Cairns Group of producer countries, which has shown leadership in devising constructive proposals aimed at liberalizing agricultural trade.