

During 1981 Canada established diplomatic relations and accredited a non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of the Maldives.

Canada-Burma relations continued to be friendly, although political and commercial contacts remained limited.

Canada's interest in the security of the South Asia region was reflected in our active involvement in the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. It was also encouraging to note the progress towards the establishment of a "South Asia Forum" which is intended to facilitate closer relations between the countries of the sub-continent.

Southeast Asia

Canada's relations with the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) continued to expand and strengthen in 1981 in recognition of the critical geographic location, growing political importance, increased economic potential and increasingly important roles of these countries in the Pacific region. Canada-ASEAN two-way trade exceeded \$1 billion in 1981, a decrease of 10.7 per cent from that of 1980, but other tangible aspects of a deepening relationship were realized. The Secretary of State for External Affairs along with the foreign ministers of other ASEAN dialogue partners met with the ASEAN foreign ministers following their annual meeting in Manila in June.

The most significant development in Canada-ASEAN relations was the signature in September by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the ASEAN foreign ministers of an Economic co-operation agreement, which will accelerate the transfer of technology and underpin Canada-ASEAN co-operation in the region.

Canada-ASEAN, a regional publication of the Canadian posts in the five ASEAN countries, made its début in January 1981. This quarterly magazine has achieved considerable success in keeping the public and private sectors in the ASEAN countries informed of Canadian activities and interests in that region.

The growing importance of Canada's relationship with the ASEAN countries was underlined by ministerial exchanges. Visits were made to Indonesia and the Philippines by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Premier of British Columbia; the Minister of State for Mines visited Thailand, while the Ministers of Supply and Services and Employment and Immigration also visited several ASEAN countries. There were eight ministerial visits to Canada from the ASEAN countries. These included the Thai, Indonesia, and Philippine Foreign Ministers; the Malaysian Ministers of Industry and Trade, and of Culture, Youth and Sports; the Thai and Indonesian Ministers of Agriculture and the Thai Minister of Industry.

Southeast Asia remained a focal point for significant Canadian development assistance in 1981. Indonesia continued to be the main regional