

ASEAN/CANADA Dialogue Relationship

In 1974, in recognition of ASEAN's role as an important factor in the peace and stability of Southeast Asia, and of the potential for links with ASEAN members, Canada began to study means to develop substantial relations with the Association. In December 1974, in a section entitled "Canadian relations with ASEAN" in the Far Eastern Economic Review, Prime Minister Trudeau wrote that our support for ASEAN and relations with its member countries are an important element in Canada's goal of seeking closer relations with the Pacific region. Canada took its first step towards relations with ASEAN when the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan MacEachen, wrote to the Malaysian Prime Minister in March, 1975 offering a programme of development assistance. Later in 1975, informal talks were held to discuss areas of co-operation. In 1976, both the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Don Jamieson, and the SSEA, Allan MacEachen, visited ASEAN countries. Mr. Jamieson committed Canada to formalize relations with ASEAN through a "Dialogue" on development assistance and economic and cultural relations.

The first Dialogue meeting between Canadian and ASEAN officials took place in February 1977 in Manila and the second in October/November 1977 in Ottawa. These meetings agreed on principles for development co-operation and discussed priority areas for co-operation. The latter were identified as 1) regional satellite