

Canada - ASEAN Relations

Canada has sought, since the mid-seventies, to develop relations with ASEAN in recognition of its positive contribution to the peace, stability and development of Southeast Asia and to strengthen bilateral links with ASEAN member states. Canada became a "dialogue partner" with ASEAN in 1977. In order to ensure a formalized contact point for each of its "dialogue partners" (Canada, Australia, the EC, Japan, New Zealand and the United States), ASEAN designates a coordinating country on a rotating basis. Canada's current dialogue coordinator is Brunei.

A Canada-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Agreement was signed in September 1981, and came into effect in June 1982. Under the Agreement, a Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was established to review progress in various forms of commercial and development cooperation between Canada and the ASEAN multilateral grouping. JCC meetings are held regularly, alternating between Canada and ASEAN capitals. The sixth meeting of the JCC was held in Brunei on November 21-22, 1989.

Since 1980, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) has attended the annual ASEAN Foreign Ministers Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) in various ASEAN capitals. The conference focuses on regional and international economic and political issues of interest to ASEAN and the dialogue partner countries. It provides a unique opportunity for the SSEA to discuss the evolving bilateral relationship with counterpart Foreign Ministers of ASEAN states.

Canada - ASEAN Trade and Investment Cooperation

Canada's economic and commercial relationship with ASEAN is strong and growing. The dynamism associated with the steady growth and diversification of the economies of the ASEAN member countries offers excellent opportunities for Canadians.

Bilateral trade between Canada and ASEAN has doubled over the past three years reaching \$3 billion in 1989. Canadian exports to the region increased from \$660 million in 1986 to \$1.34 billion in 1989, while imports grew from \$854 million to \$1.64 billion during the same period. There is tremendous potential for future growth in the ASEAN-Canada trading relationship. ASEAN and Canadian exports account for only approximately 1% of each other's markets and there is real complementarity between Canadian consulting skills and sectors of strength, such as telecommunications, and ASEAN development and investment needs.

Canada and ASEAN have agreed that one of our fundamental objectives is to expand trade between our countries to a level more commensurate with our respective economic strengths. To this end, the Canadian Government has funded a series of conferences, trade and investment missions and feasibility studies aimed at expanding the commercial relationship.

The value of Canadian direct investment in ASEAN countries increased from \$800 million in 1980 to \$1.5 billion in 1989. While the INCO mining investment in Indonesia accounts for a major portion of this amount, the Canadian presence in ASEAN countries, through joint ventures or other forms of investment is expanding.