

CANADA-ASEAN RELATIONS

Canada enjoys excellent relations with ASEAN. We have been a "Dialogue Partner" since 1977, and the signing of the ASEAN-Canada Economic Cooperation Agreement in 1981 provided the framework for even closer industrial, commercial and development cooperation. The ASEAN-Canada Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meets regularly to review progress in those areas. The last meeting of the JCC was held in Ottawa in April 1991.

Close political cooperation, as well as annual consultations at the Foreign Minister level, have confirmed Canada's credentials as a Pacific nation, and provided a platform and venue for participation in Southeast Asian affairs far beyond what could otherwise have been attained.

Today, relations between Canada and ASEAN are multi-faceted. We share many common objectives. Fundamental to our mutual interests is a common desire to promote peace and prosperity in Asia and elsewhere in the world. Our shared position in the Cambodia peace process is evidence of our mutual desire to promote regional harmony. Canada also shares Commonwealth membership with Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam.

Canadian trade relations with the ASEAN countries form a strong basis for growing Canadian contact with the region. Total two-way trade reached a high of C\$ 3.4 billion in 1990 and represented a diverse mix of commodities and manufactured goods.

We cooperate as well in the Uruguay Round of the MTN in the search for international reform of the world trading system. Canada and four members of ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand) also share membership of the Cairns Group which has led in the development of constructive proposals aimed at liberalizing agricultural trade.

It is through such cooperation that Canada and ASEAN have been able to develop the warm and friendly relations that are a feature of the relationship today. Regular dialogue has been mutually beneficial in promoting closer understanding and in identifying new areas for cooperation as partners in the region.

Building on these strengths, Canada is well-positioned to promote human rights, democratic development, and environmental awareness within ASEAN, and participate in the development of the region.