



Secretary of State for Asia Pacific, Mr. Raymond Chan, with Canada World Youth participants in Phichit, Thailand. Mr. Chan visited Hong Kong, China, Thailand and Japan in January to discuss a range of bilateral issues and trade opportunities.

plements work in other regional and international bodies such as the OECD, GATT and the G7, and will become increasingly important as the Asia Pacific region itself takes on greater weight in global affairs.

Environment

Several Asia Pacific countries are important players in global environmental issues such as climate change and biodiversity cooperation. Canada cooperates with regional states on environmental issues through Canadian International Development Agency programs; through APEC's working groups on marine resource conservation, fisheries, energy and tourism; and through policy discussions and cooperative arrangements on issues like environmental protection, forestry management, water management, energy efficiency, science and technology.

The APEC focus on economic cooperation and trade liberalization would be enriched by incorporating the broader question of sustainable development. Canada has invited APEC environment ministers to meet in Vancouver March 24-25, on the margins of the Globe 94 exhibition and conference. The focus will be to assess opportunities for cooperation among APEC members, to discuss regional priorities and implementation of Agenda 21 follow-up to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, and to consider how to promote the integration of sustainable development in the APEC agenda.

Canada and ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Founded in 1967, it is the most successful organization in Asia Pacific, with an effective program of consultation and political cooperation. ASEAN began establishing "dialogue partnerships" with selected countries in 1972. Canada became a dialogue partner in 1977. Other such partners are Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the US and the European Union.

Political links between Canada and ASEAN have developed through the Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) of ASEAN and dialogue partner foreign ministers that is held following the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting each year. The PMC, and the

Senior Officials Meeting that precedes it, provide opportunities for exchanges on regional and global issues, such as APEC, GATT, human rights and regional security. The 1993 PMC in Singapore endorsed the launching of an ASEAN Regional Forum for the discussion of security issues. The first meeting will be in Bangkok in July. Participants will include not only ASEAN countries and dialogue partners, but also China, Russia, Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea (see p. 2 for details).

A Canada-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1981 to promote closer industrial, commercial and development cooperation between the parties. A revised Economic Cooperation Agreement was signed in July 1993. The new agreement will foster greater private sector cooperation, assist in the liberalization and expansion of trade relations, and target development to the mutual benefit of both Canada and ASEAN.

Human Rights

The Asia Pacific region has a mixed record on human rights, reflecting its political and cultural diversity. All Asian governments joined in the Vienna Declaration (1993) that human rights everywhere are the legitimate concern of the international community. Canada continues to monitor the situation in the region closely and has been active in making representations on general human rights situations and individual cases. An important aspect of Canada's development cooperation programs in Asia Pacific involves working with governments and non-governmental organizations to strengthen institutions for human rights and democratic development.

Forum on International Relations

University of Toronto professor Janice Gross Stein and Montreal business executive Pierre S. Pettigrew will act as co-chairs of the first National Forum on Canada's International Relations to be held March 21-22 in Ottawa. The purpose of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for Canadians to consider the implications of the rapidly changing international and domestic environments as they affect foreign affairs, and to offer views on the impact these changes should have on Canada's policy priorities. Some 120 people from a number of backgrounds and with involvement in business, labour, universities, non-governmental organizations, aboriginal affairs and the media are expected to participate in this first Forum. They have been invited in a personal capacity on the basis of their knowledge and experience. The National Forum, which will be held annually, is an important dimension of the foreign policy review process initiated by the government.