

CANADA-ASEAN RELATIONS

Relations between Canada and ASEAN are strong and multi-faceted.

In recognition of ASEAN's positive contribution to the peace, stability and development of Southeast Asia and its ability to strengthen bilateral links between ASEAN member states, Canada sought to develop relations with the Association in the mid 1970's. Joining Australia, the European Community, Japan, New Zealand and the United States, Canada was recognized as a "dialogue" partner in 1977. (A dialogue partner is assigned on a rotating basis to an ASEAN member country as a formalized contact point.) Among other benefits, Canada's status as a dialogue partner creates the opportunity for it to fully participate in the annual ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Post Ministerial Conference (PMC), to discuss the evolving relationship with its individual ASEAN "dialogue" partner and to voice Canada's perspective on political and economic issues affecting the region.

In 1989, Canada established the Canada-ASEAN Centre in Singapore in part to facilitate our ASEAN-wide development co-operation activities, but also more generally to extend Canada's profile in the region. The Centre's new quarterly publication "RAPPORT" highlights Canada's relationships with the countries of the ASEAN region. The Centre also promotes the understanding of our respective institutions, cultures and peoples through programs in public affairs, institutional co-operation, academic relations and business co-operation. The focus of Canada's development co-operation with ASEAN countries has shifted from a policy centred primarily on natural resource development and technology transfer, to one of increased industrial co-operation and human resource development.

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, whose mandate encompasses the entire Asia Pacific region, opened an office in Singapore in 1990 to strengthen Canada's involvement in the ASEAN region. The Foundation works towards these objectives through various cultural, educational, business and media programs. Examples of recent Foundation activities in the ASEAN region are as follows: a) sponsoring an annual Media Fellowship Program whereby Canadian journalists spend two months in an Asian country, to study its culture, institutions, politics and development, and in 1991, sponsoring 5 ASEAN journalists on a 6 week media tour through Canada; b) sponsoring or co-sponsoring ASEAN participants at international conferences in Canada such as the Pacific Rim Opportunities Conference (PROC VII) in Calgary in 1991 and GLOBE '92 - an international conference on business and the environment held in Vancouver; and c) launching many academic initiatives (over 50 in 1990) in Canada at the secondary and post-secondary level.

CANADA-ASEAN ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

Canada's economic and commercial relationship with ASEAN as a region is expanding. The dynamic growth and diversification of the economies of the ASEAN member countries offer excellent opportunities for Canadians.