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CANADIAN ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP IN THE
SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATION
(SEAMEO)

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that the Government of Canada is seeking Canadian associate membership in SEAMEO, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, which serves as a vehicle to promote cooperation in the region through education, science and culture. Membership is largely drawn from Southeast Asian nations, including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Cambodia.

By taking this important step, Canada expects to broaden its economic, social and cultural ties in the Asia Pacific region, which the Government of Canada has identified as a priority area for the enhancement of its international trade. Canadian membership in SEAMEO would provide the social and cultural basis to enhance export opportunities for Canadian goods and services, and to further the industrial development of Southeast Asia through human resource development. Membership would also increase the visibility of Canada's educational institutions and serve as a vehicle for attracting more foreign students to Canadian universities and colleges.

Canadian membership in SEAMEO has been strongly encouraged by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, and has also met with the favour of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, the Canadian International Development Agency and the federal Department of the Secretary of State.

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The Canadian bid is expected to receive enthusiastic support from the existing SEAMEO membership, which includes three other Associate Members - France, Australia and New Zealand. Canada has already contributed to various SEAMEO programmes, and in 1985 signed an agreement to provide a contribution of \$9 million over five years.

Membership in SEAMEO, a Pacific-based organization, will complement Canada's existing longstanding participation in regional bodies such as the Colombo Plan and the Asian Development Bank, and will enhance Canada's growing relationship with the members of ASEAN.