

Papua New Guinea and Vietnam). In 2011 the participants in the ARF were the ten ASEAN members, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, the EU, India, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and the USA.

ASEAN is committed to resolving the dispute over sovereignty of the Spratly Islands, a group of more than 100 small islands and reefs in the South China Sea. Some or all of the largely uninhabited islands have been claimed by Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. The disputed areas have oil and gas resources.

Organization. The highest authority is the meeting of Heads of Government, which takes place twice annually. The highest policy-making body is the annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers, commonly known as AMM, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, which convenes in each of the member countries on a rotational basis in alphabetical order. The AEM (ASEAN Economic Meeting) meets each year to direct ASEAN economic co-operation. The AEM and AMM report jointly to the heads of government at summit meetings. Each capital has its own national secretariat. The central secretariat in Jakarta is headed by the Secretary-General, a post that revolves among the member states in alphabetical order every five years.

Official language: English.

Headquarters: 70A Jl. Sisingamangaraja, Jakarta 12110, Indonesia.

Website: <http://www.aseansec.org>

Secretary-General: Surin Pitsuwan (Thailand).

ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Co-operation (Mekong Group)

The ministers and representatives of Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam met in Kuala Lumpur on 17 June 1996 and agreed the following objectives for the Group: to co-operate in the economic and social development of the Mekong Basin area and strengthen the link between it and ASEAN member countries, through a process of dialogue and common project identification.

Priorities include: development of infrastructure capacities in the fields of transport, telecommunications, irrigation and energy; development of trade and investment-generating activities; development of the agricultural sector to enhance production; sustainable development of forestry resources and development of mineral resources; development of the industrial sector, especially small to medium enterprises; development of tourism; human resource development and support for training; co-operation in the fields of science and technology.

Further Reading

Beeson, Mark, *Regionalism & Globalization in East Asia: Politics, Security & Economic Development*. 2006.—*Contemporary Southeast Asia*. 2nd ed. 2008

Broinowski, A., *Understanding ASEAN*. 1982.—(ed.) *ASEAN into the 1990s*. 1990

Van Hoa, Tran, (ed.) *Economic Developments and Prospects in the ASEAN*. 1997

Wawn, B., *The Economics of the ASEAN Countries*. 1982

Colombo Plan

History. Founded in 1950 to promote the development of newly independent Asian member countries, the Colombo Plan has

grown from a group of seven Commonwealth nations into an organization of 25 countries. Originally the Plan was conceived for a period of six years but the Consultative Committee gave the Plan an indefinite life span in 1980.

Members. Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji Islands, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, South Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA and Vietnam. (*Provisional member country*) Brunei.

Aims. The aims of the Colombo Plan are: (1) to provide a forum for discussion, at local level, of development needs; (2) to facilitate development assistance by encouraging members to participate as donors and recipients of technical co-operation; and (3) to execute programmes to advance development within member countries. The Plan currently has the following programmes: Programme for Public Administration (PPA); South-South Technical Co-operation Data Bank Programme (SSTC/DB); Drug Advisory Programme (DAP); Programme for Private Sector Development (PPSD); Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education (CPSC).

Structure. The Consultative Committee is the principal policy-making body of the Colombo Plan. Consisting of all member countries, it meets every two years to review the economic and social progress of members, exchange views on technical co-operation programmes and review the Plan's activities. The Colombo Plan Council represents each member government and meets several times a year to identify development issues, recommend measures to be taken and ensure implementation.

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Secretary-General: Adam Maniku (Maldives).

Publications. *Consultative Committee Meeting—Proceedings and Conclusions* (biennial); *Report of the Colombo Plan Council* (annual); *The Colombo Plan Brochure* (annual); *The Colombo Plan Focus* (quarterly newsletter); *South-South Technical Co-operation in Selected Member Countries*.

Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO)

The Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey and the successor of the Regional Co-operation for Development (RCD). ECO was expanded in 1992 to include seven new members: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The organization's objectives, stipulated in its Charter, the Treaty of Izmir, include the promotion of conditions for sustained economic growth in the region. Transport and communications, trade and investment, and energy are the high priority areas in ECO's scheme of work although industry, agriculture, health, science and education, drug control and human development are also on the agenda.

The Council of Ministers (COM) remains the highest policy and decision-making body of the organization, meeting at least once a year and chaired by rotation among the member states.

ECO Summits were instituted with the First Summit held in Tehran in 1992; the Second Summit was held in Istanbul in 1993, the Third in Islamabad in 1995, the Fourth in Ashgabat in 1996,