

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Organization: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

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Description On 8 August 1967, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration in Bangkok, Thailand, the countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand established the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, more commonly known as ASEAN. Brunei Darussalam (1984), Vietnam (1995), Laos (1997), Myanmar (1997) and Cambodia (1999) have subsequently joined the organization, bringing its membership to a total of ten countries. Recently, ASEAN welcomed the addition of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China to become ASEAN+3.



The 10 members countries of ASEAN



ASEAN+3

The organization is guided by a number of fundamental principles aimed at political and economic cooperation in the region. These include mutual respect for independence and sovereignty, non-interference by member states, renunciation of force or threats, and effective cooperation. ASEAN heads of state meet each year at a Summit. The Foreign Ministers meet annually at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. Support staff includes twenty-nine committees of senior officials and 122 technical support groups.

In 1992, at the ASEAN Summit in Singapore, the member nations initiated a proposal for free trade in the region. This support for free trade highlighted a more "open" and contemporary form of regionalism that differs from earlier, protectionist regional arrangements. In its informal character and its emphasis on sovereignty, ASEAN differs from other regional groupings such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is an example of how globalization has not necessarily erased regional differences.

Suggested
Reading:

Association of Southeast Asian Nations website. www.aseansec.org
(accessed 22 December 2004).