

Article

United ASEAN, Prosperous Southeast Asia

Since its establishment in 1967, collaborations between ASEAN countries have proven to be crucial for the progress and development of the Southeast Asian region. ASEAN was founded on 8 August 1967 by five countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

The establishment of ASEAN aimed to enhance economic, political, security, social, and cultural cooperation among its member states. The political and economic conditions in Southeast Asia at that time, marked by instability and conflict among the countries in the region, prompted the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN. ASEAN aims to create peace, security, and stability in the Southeast Asian region through cooperation and dialogue.

ASEAN's first collaboration was the signing of the Bangkok Declaration on 8 August 1967, officially establishing the association. The declaration was signed by the five founding countries of ASEAN and marked the beginning of political, security, and economic cooperation among those countries.

Following the Bangkok Declaration in 1987, ASEAN launched a series of programs and initiatives to strengthen regional cooperation among its members. ASEAN initially focused on political and security cooperation, emphasizing efforts to prevent conflicts and maintain peace in the region.

One of the early programs of ASEAN was the establishment of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) in 1971. This initiative aims to reduce the threat of nuclear in the region and promote security cooperation. The member states also collaborated in the economic field by launching the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992 to improve trade among member states.

In addition, ASEAN has made various efforts to increase cooperation in education, environment, culture, and other sectors. For example, the association founded the ASEAN Basic Education Program to improve access to education throughout the region. ASEAN also launched initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve nature conservation in the region.

Overall, the programs carried out by ASEAN since the signing of the Bangkok Declaration aimed to strengthen cooperation among member countries and promote peace, stability, and prosperity in Southeast Asia.

Since its founding, ASEAN has developed and currently consists of 10 members with the addition of Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. ASEAN has made many achievements in enhancing cooperation in various fields and continues to strive to strengthen its role and influence in the region.

ASEAN has implemented various programs that have significant impacts on its member states. The following are some of ASEAN's programs with the most significant impacts:

1. ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA): AFTA is a free trade area established in 1992 that aimed to increase trade among ASEAN member states and reduce trade barriers.

This program has had a positive impact on economic growth and trade among ASEAN members.

2. ASEAN Economic Community (AEC): AEC was founded in 2015 with the purpose of creating a single market and production base throughout ASEAN. This program aims to enhance economic integration and stability among ASEAN members. The AEC also aims to create healthy competition among member states and open up greater business opportunities.
3. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF): ARF is a multilateral forum first held in 1994 to promote cooperation and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. This forum involves 27 countries, among others all ASEAN member states, China, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. This program aims to strengthen cooperation among member countries on regional security issues.
4. ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB): ACB was established in 2005 as an institution aimed at conserving biodiversity in the region. ACB focuses on programs that safeguard flora, fauna, and ecosystem in the region.
5. ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASEM): ASEM is a forum for education ministers of ASEAN member states to discuss issues on education in the region. This meeting aims to improve the quality of education and equality among member states.

ASEAN countries continue to strive to strengthen their collaborations and improve the welfare of their people through such programs. As a heterogeneous region, collaboration between countries is crucial to achieving mutually beneficial goals. Apart from that, ASEAN members can reinforce their positions on a global level and advocate for common interests in international forums through cooperation.

In an effort to enrich collaboration between countries, ASEAN also has enlisted the cooperation of countries outside the region. Through the ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, and South Korea) dialogue, ASEAN aims to enhance cooperation in the economic, political, and security sectors with these countries. ASEAN also holds dialogues with other countries, such as the United States, India, and the European Union.

Despite the many programs and initiatives of ASEAN, many challenges need to be addressed in strengthening collaboration between ASEAN members. Security issues, such as conflicts in the North Natuna Sea and terrorism, are challenges that ASEAN countries need to overcome together.

Therefore, efforts to improve ASEAN collaboration need to be pursued and strengthened continuously. ASEAN countries must work together intensively in various fields to achieve common goals. Moreover, such collaboration needs the support of effective and transparent systems and strong public support.

In a rapidly developing era of globalization, collaboration between nations is becoming more important to achieve greater and more beneficial goals for all people. In the context of ASEAN, this collaboration is key to achieving security, stability, and prosperity in the region. Therefore, ASEAN members need to continue improving their collaboration and strive for common goals to achieve progress and success in the future. In other words, a United ASEAN, a Prosperous Southeast Asia.(DA/FW)

References:

ASEAN Smart Cities Network. ASEAN. Accessed from asean.org.

ASEAN Single Window. ASEAN. Accessed from asean.org.

ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. ASEAN. Accessed from asean.org.

ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy. ASEAN. Accessed from asean.org.

ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. ASEAN Secretariat (2021). Accessed from <https://asean.org/asean-economic-community-blueprint-2025/>.

ASEAN and the Institutionalization of Regionalism in Southeast Asia. David Martin Jones, M. L. R. Smith (Routledge, 2005).

The ASEAN Regional Forum. Sheldon W. Simon, Michael R. Chambers (Routledge, 2017).

#ASEANMatters

#ASEANIndonesia2023

#ASEANEpicentrumofGrowth